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The Captive Goddess

Or, THE FAR NORTH GUARD :-: By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER I.

THE MAN AND DANGER.

HE WALKED with the firm tread of one with a definite purpose in view. Near at hand a gurgling sound betrayed the flow of the river; farther away, voices raised in song told of the proximity of other men. He who walked heard these things and no more. He saw next to nothing, for the night was dark.

The place was Garraway, a settlement on Red River. It had come into existence in consequence of the fur-trade, and, being practically an adjunct of Red River Settlement, was much frequented by voyageurs, bushrangers and trappers. The song heard this night were those of boatmen temporarily free from the call of labor and duty.

The man who walked reached a retired house, knocked, was admitted, and shut in by a promptly-barred door. Before him was a man who carried a dim light. They exchanged a nod, and then, without a word, went upstairs to a better-lighted room. Still silent, they took chairs on opposite sides of a table. The host pushed a box of tobacco toward the caller. They filled their pipes, and clouds of peace arose. The host was fifty years old, sharp-featured and gray-haired. He was James MacNash, and was an agent of the Northwest Fur Company. His companion was but half his age, black-haired and of muscular build. Men addressed him as Jean Huot, and he was publicly known only as a voyageur.

Half an hour before, as Jean sat in a public room, MacNash had entered, lingered briefly, made a secret gesture, and gone without a word to him who looked. Yet, that gesture, unnoticed by others, had called Jean, and now he was come.

Presently MacNash broke the silence. "Do you want a dangerous enterprise?" he asked.

"When the H. B. C. beckons I am ready," replied Jean, steadily.

"To the death?"

The voyageur shrugged his shoulders. "What are we here for?" he returned.

MacNash smiled. The reply pleased him. He leaned forward, and, pipe in hand, spoke incisively.

"To work, to watch, to plot, perhaps to die! To wear the livery of the Northwest Company, and, meanwhile, to study how we can serve the cause of the Hudson Bay Company, bearing the peril of the schemes of the rival fur companies. To lead a double life and risk discovery that would mean death. Enough! I talk like a boy. David, there is something afoot."

"If bred in Northwest brains, it is surnamed knavery. Well?"

"Tonight a boat starts for the other side of the continent by way of Lake Winnipeg. It goes secretly and in darkness; no man but those directly concerned is to see or know of the affair. It is no private matter, but something that lies close to the heart of the Northwest concern, an affair of state. Still, I am mightily perplexed."

"How did you learn of it?"

"A letter from Roger Belford. I have orders to fill the boat with bold, hardy voyageurs, loyal to the core. Belford wrote, 'Get the toughest knots you can find in the woods,' which means that only scoundrels are wanted. Martin Derg brought the note. You know him—a dried-up voyageur, half French and half Indian, plucky, unscrupulous, a man born and bred in the lone places, and past grand master of trap, paddle, gun and wood-sign."

"Right," agreed Jean, with a short nod. "Mystery riots through it all," pursued MacNash, thoughtfully. "Of a sudden this boat is hurried away on a journey of hundreds of miles, clear to the Pacific Ocean. Clearly, the object vitally concerns the Northwesters. Belford, usually so cool, wrote feverishly. Only weighty complications can have stirred him from his calm."

"You say you are to select the boatmen?"

"Seven of them, of whom Martin Derg will be one."

"I can guess why you summoned me."

"Will you go?"

"The matter is not open to question. I will go."

The answer was quiet and steady, and the speaker refilled his pipe with a firm hand. MacNash eyed him critically.

"Here, as secret agents—spies, if you prefer it—you and I are in daily danger, but it is as nothing compared with what you will risk in that little boat, far from any town, far from all friends. Your comrades will be men who bend the knee to the Northwest Company. If they know you for what you are—and detection may come—they will kill you with as little compunction as if you were a wolf."

"Granted! Consider me fully warned. Who else goes?"

"A captain is selected, and Martin Derg makes another. The rest I am to select. You know who is here better than I. Skilled voyageurs are wanted. How many can you name?"

"Probably thirty men are at hand, of whom no more than two crews are really skilful. One boat can be filled with men fit to pull for life, and scalpful of cunning at their art."

"How many are men of honor? Can we get three or four who, if suitably persuaded, would favor the Hudson Bay Company?"

"The tough knots called for are at hand; the men of honor, as you term it, are lacking. As for fellows with friendly feeling for the H. B. C., there are none."

"Not one—or two?"

"Not a man!"

"Bad, bad! Why, voyageur, dare you risk your life with desperadoes in a region where there is no house in a thousand-mile journey, and where, perhaps, you can meet no friend in the two months necessary for the trip? If they suspect that you are an agent of the chartered company they will kill you instantly."

"MacNash, say no more. When the H. B. C. beckons, I go!"

"But the secrecy of this affair, the tone of Belford's letter, his exortations to this and that—all these things show that something vitally concerning the rival fur companies is under way. Mystery oozes from it like pitch from a tree, and peril waits like a dog to keep you company. You will be one man opposed to eight——"

"Let me see the letter."

MacNash brought a sheet of paper, and they bent forward over the table and read.

It was the year 1816. Rupert's Land was an arena of strife. Two great fur companies struggled for the trade of a region that stretched from Labrador to the Pacific Ocean, and from the United States to the seas of the north pole—that was the fur-land. It was the place of the trapper and voyageur, of vast solitudes, of varied wilderness and of peculiar riches. It was the home of the fur-bearing animals whose presence gave employment to the widely-scattered army of laborers and poured money into the pockets of the stockholders.

In that wild region the hostile fur companies were in a death struggle for supremacy. The trade of Rupert's Land meant riches. Each company was determined to have that trade to itself. Rivalry has gone to an extreme. Legitimate competition was succeeded by trickery and violence. Men beset their fellows not only with brains, but with guns and knives. Death walked with the trapper, and the trapper fell shot from ambush or stabbed in the back.

David Reith and James MacNash were of the better class who deplored lawlessness and crime, but were unable to prevent it. Loyal adherents of the Bay Company, they were its secret agents. Residing within the strongholds of the Northwesters, they accepted employment and posed as its followers, but all the while they watched, listened, and absorbed information which was duly reported to their real leaders. In reality spies, they felt no reproach from this. They believed they were excusable for using their brains where other men shot and murdered.

MacNash used his real name and was widely known. Reith was less in the open. Born of Scotch parents, he had inherited dark complexion, and, having from his earliest years spoken the French language of Canada freely, he now posed as a man of French blood and called himself Jean Huot. His field of operations brought him hard work and but little renown. As voyageur and bushranger, however, he excelled, and, patiently pursuing his chosen line, he was of great service to MacNash and the H. B. C.

This was the man upon whom was to fall the burden of a peril-haunted adventure which was wrapped in mystery. Without the support of a single friend, he was going forth to meet the danger and seek for the solution of the mystery.

Midnight found a party of eight thread-

An exciting battle with foaming water and jagged rocks.

ing the forest five miles west of Garrsway. MacNash had, with David's assistance, selected the necessary voyageurs. It had been supposed that the boat they were to man would start from the settlement, but when Martin Derg, the one person previously chosen, appeared to take temporary charge, he led the way on foot, into the woods.

Agent MacNash watched them go with deep forebodings. To his former fears for David's safety was added the knowledge, derived from Derg, that the captain of the craft was to be one Ferdinand Gareau, a well-known partisan, and this worried MacNash afresh. Gareau was a dashing, loquacious, plausible fellow, but his record was streaked with red. In his estimation human life was a toy to be kept or broken as circumstances demanded.

Thus, when MacNash had watched the party out of sight, he gloomily shook his head and muttered: "I have this night buried David Reith!"

CHAPTER II.

THE VEILED MYSTERY.

A challenge came out of the darkness. "Who goes?"

"A party of humble trappers."

"Bien! Advance, mes enfants!"

Eight miles the voyageurs had glided cat-footed through the forest, but, though the treetops were thick and the moon only a skeleton, it had been with the ground-devouring gait of the practiced bushranger. Eight sturdy forms parted the bushes, and twice as many feet pattered on the earth, but they made less noise than a single roaming bear. Reaching a tributary of the Red River, Martin Derg, their leader, had stayed his steps and looked about him until the challenge sounded.

A man came out of cover, and Reith recognized Ferdinand Gareau. The captain waved his hand with a peculiar, airy sweep.

"Well come and well run. I assume, Martin, that all has gone well. You have the men, I see—seven besides yourself. I know more voyageurs by reputation than by sight. Call the roll, mon ami."

"Their names, Captain, are Napoleon Pau, Solime Vager, Jules Findley, Jean Huot, Henri Grout, Luc Chalifoux and Jacques Roussin."

"Pau is a veteran of the woods. Him and Grout I know, and have heard of all the others. Better men could not be found in Rupert's Land. They are a party after my own heart. Anything to report, Derg?"

"Only that all is well."

"Enough. To the Red. This way!"

Gareau led upstream a few paces. The moon cast its light on the open water, and Reith could see with tolerable distinctness. A boat lay by the bank, with a person within and two others on land. Both of the latter quickly walked away, seeming to shun recognition. Gareau followed, a few words were spoken, and then there was hand-shaking and all but the captain disappeared quietly into the forest. He returned, ordered his men to their places, and in a short time they were moving down the stream, with David Reith pulling a port oar. Gareau had the steersman's position.

Thus far Reith had learned nothing about the secret of the expedition. Never before had he seen so strange a boat-taking. They were on the water at that time called the River of the Silver Wolf, though less than a half day's pull from the great Red. Farther toward the headwaters of the Silver Wolf there was no settlement, and but miseable voyaging. It was a region where men were seldom called by business. Knowing the river well, and knowing woods and woodgoers equally well, Reith was positive that the boat had been laboriously pulled up the Silver Wolf from the Red by unknown persons, and now the present party was to send it down again. The question was Why had it not been started from some point on the Red, instead of with all this circumlocution and delay?

The craft was a typical "inland boat," and filled with what looked like typical "inland pieces," or packages, but David was not long in noticing that the craft rode more buoyantly than was usual with a full burden, and, though many light-weight packages went west in trade, he did not doubt that a part of the cargo was only for appearances.

Something else was even more impressive. The person in the bows was still there, silent and phlegmatic, and David had readily discovered that she was an Indian woman. Close beside her, however, was that which perplexed the young man.

A dark, hump-like object, a something unrecognizable, vague, and most strange in boating. From the first he knew it was a thing covered with a robe or blanket, or other screen. For a time he regarded it as a choice part of the cargo, an inanimate part of the mystery; but this opinion had given place to another. As they stepped aboard he had, unless he greatly erred, detected a certain movement in that quarter. There was life under the screen!

When he had taken his seat, with his back to the hump, he could see it no more, but it haunted him. Life under the cover! What life? Animal? Perhaps! Human? If so, who went shielded from view like a rare treasure in the lands of barbarism?

Puzzled, Reith pulled at his oar and mused. He had many ideas, but none that explained matters to his satisfaction. Two miles had been ticked off when Ferdinand Gareau directed them to cease pulling.

"What is before us?" he added. "Quiet waters? Who has rowed here? Somebody who once came up has told of a bad spot where a carry was often necessary. Who has rowed here?"

"I have passed through," replied Vager. "The water is bad, even for a small boat. I never ran it in an inland boat, nor heard of it being done. The Rapids of the Scolding Woman are bad. It runs swift, it turns evil corners, it whips at the rocks. A wrong take and the jagged stones slit the craft as I cut bread."

"Why did they let me embark on this diabolical stream?" cried Gareau, angrily. "There shall be a settlement when—but, men, who knows the rapids best?"

"Jean Huot!" replied Findley, quickly.

"Is it so, Jean?" asked the captain, with a swift shift of glance.

"I can't say who knows it best," replied Reith, calmly, "but I have run that rapid. Give me a boat by myself, and I'll do it every moonlight summer night, if need be. Danger? Yes, but rocks known are stripped of half their terrors."

Gareau seemed excited. He fretted at delay, yet he did not want disaster. For several minutes he beset David with rapid and practical questions. At the end he lifted his voice more cheerfully.

"Voila!" he cried, "we will run the rapids. Jean Huot, since you say it is but half a mile away, go to the bows, and then stand there and direct us as usual. Vager, lift your oar!"

Reith started for his new post. To get there he had to pass the covered something that had so perplexed him. Now, too, he had it again under his observation, and he looked hard. Then he had a strange thought. A year before, when in Montreal, he had been invited to the clubroom of a party of flippant young city men. Desiring to interest the visitor from the lone-places, they had told him they were to have a heathen rite. He went, he saw; but, now, only one thing pertaining to that occasion was of interest to him.

They had unveiled the bust of a mythological goddess, destined from that time to preside over their society gatherings. Now, Reith was reminded by the covered object in the inland boat of that goddess before the unveiling. The resemblance was almost perfect.

As he reached the side of the mysterious object it shifted slightly, as if to let him pass. Ferdinand Gareau coughed with a forced sound, and the unknown became motionless. Passing by, Reith saw the Indian woman rather clearly, and saw as ugly a creature as he had ever beheld. She moved openly, and he took position in the bows.

Progress was resumed, and, after an exciting battle with foaming water and jagged rocks, the rapids were run under his skilful direction. When he looked back and announced that danger was past, his leader replied with an accent of deep relief.

"Vraiment! that is very good. I despise a rapid I don't know. A cunning voyageur, you, Huot! Take your seat!"

In obeying, Reith again had to pass the veiled something, but there was no stir. Perhaps Gareau's former warning was remembered, but Reith did not forget that life was behind the veil.

Way was resumed, with all voyageurs at the oars, but barely ten minutes had elapsed when voices sounded loudly in the forest, and the captain gave an imperative order.

"Lay her under the bushes and wait!" he directed. "Pull softly!"

They pulled to land and Gareau caught hold of a bush and held the boat stationary with one hand while with the other he drew a pistol.

"Dead silence!" he directed. "If we are molested, fight!"

The wood-walkers drew near, they passed, jesting in French, and then receded without having seen the party that hid. In a way it was a simple matter, but to Reith, who knew Ferdinand Gareau to be a man of wonderfully bold nature, it implied far more than ordinary desire for secrecy. Why, with eight sturdy men at his back, did Gareau hide?

"Better so!" the captain muttered, as the strangers drew well away. "Better for us, better for them. Oars!"

Way was resumed once more, but presently the leader spoke softly with Derg, who was now in familiar waters, and Reith heard the latter explain that they were "almost there." What this meant was clear at the end of fifteen minutes, when they turned to one side, passing through an arm of water and so to a pool, where halt was made.

"Voyageurs," said Gareau, "there will be no more rowing until dark. We go into camp here. I have strict orders for you. A watch will be allowed long enough to make tea, and no longer. I shall stay by the boat, and you by the fire. No man but Martin Derg must intrude near the boat on severe penalty. Understand?"

"Yes, Captain," the voyageurs said, almost in chorus.

"No man is to walk more than a hundred feet east or twice that distance west, and this order holds all day. Understand?"

Again the affirmative response.

"Martin will show you what is wanted, and if I am not near, ask him necessary questions. But no more of you is to come near the boat. Understand?"

They did understand. Strict disciplinarian that Ferdinand was, and severe in his judgments upon offenders, no man who knew him could fail to comprehend when he reiterated orders and backed them up with tones as imperative as he now used.

"All hands ashore!" he continued, and the landing was made.

The sun would soon shine warmly into the pool and around it, but a tent was pitched and a quantity of robes and blankets carried and spread inside. It was strange luxury for the rough furland.

David Reith was one who helped about these things. He did his work faithfully and betrayed no meddlesome curiosity, but he saw a good deal and thought even more.

The object in the bow—the veiled goddess, as he had come to term the object in his mind—had not changed. Quiet and motionless, the thing might have been only merchandise, but he noted that the cover was thinner and more expensive than the goods used in the furtrade.

Daylight gave him chance to look more closely at the Indian woman. She was far from young, but not old enough to be decrepit. On the contrary, she was the picture of strength, health, and endurance. If "tough knots" had been selected for voyageurs, the desired line had not stopped with them. The woman was all bone, muscle, and sinew.

Her face was worthy of more than one glance. Bony, lacking in flesh, rather intelligent in a way, and full of low cunning, it was a sullen, frowning, hard and pitiless face. She looked like an animal, that, passive when in repose, would slay and feel no compunction when need required. Reith learned that her name was Life Hand.

When work had been completed at this point, Martin Derg took the voyageurs a few rods into the woods.

"Today," he explained, "we cook for ourselves. After that, Life Hand will do most of the labor. Vraiment! that is fine. Hein?"

There was an affirmative murmur.

"Our fire," added Martin, "will soon be alight and then sped. There must be dry wood over yonder. Vager and Chalifoux, come with me to look for it. Stay! Bear in mind, I go not far."

They scattered. Reith went by himself. He had no intention of acting the spy, but, by chance, he came to where there was a break in the woods so that, looking toward the pool, he saw the boat. All was as he had seen it last.

He was turning away when Gareau appeared from the adjacent bushes and advanced to the boat. The captain stepped inside. He looked toward the bow and seemed to speak. Then Reith saw something well worth looking at. The mysterious hump stirred visibly, the cover was cast aside, and a young woman leaped to her feet. The Goddess was unveiled!

A woman, young, shapely, handsomely dressed, attractive of appearance, graceful of poise—a strange traveler of the wilds, a goddess, indeed. This was the decision of David Reith, voyageur. Standing on light feet and looking as dainty as the bird that perched momentarily on the rear thwart, she addressed the captain. Animation and joy, and relief that she need no longer sit cramped and covered—all this David believed he could read in her face, but he was too far away to see whether she was plain or pretty; too far to hear her words.

The voice of prudence sounded in David's ears. If he was detected spying, or seeming to spy, upon his commander his power with the party would be gone, and he would become a man marked for suspicion and the ill will of Ferdinand Gareau. Amazing as it was that the Goddess should be there, it was his place to ignore her.

He stepped to cover and went about his work. By the time he had taken a quantity of firewood to where the camp was to be made others had brought their share and no more was needed. The blaze was started and all gave thought to breakfast—all but David Reith. His thoughts dwelt upon the Goddess!

CHAPTER III.

SHOTS ARE FIRED.

With the fire extinguished the voyageurs sat down to their breakfast of richot, bread and tea, after which they filled their pipes with a mixture of tobacco and barouge from their fire-bags.

David Reith looked his companions over. Each was like his fellow, muscular, hardy, wiry, and graceful, and black of hair and swarthy of face. Every man had Indian blood, and some were three-quarters Cree or Assiniboine, with only a small alloy of French. Typical of their calling, they were indolent in times of relaxation, but bold and seething with life when afloat. Storms, rapids, and hostile men had no terrors for them, and they would dare the life with careless laugh, and, laughing, usually win.

Truly, they were the "tough knots" that had been called for by the employers. Their faces pictured fierce passions in frail leash, and if they laughed when happy, they killed as lightly when they saw need. And such need was usually their inclination rather than their necessity.

Smoking, now, they had become voluble, when, from the direction of the boat, came a laugh, soft, musical, feminine. The boatmen stared at the bushes that lay between themselves and the boat and grinned.

"Voila!" exclaimed Jacques Roussin, "there is music in the woods!"

"Life Hand has a bell-like voice," quoth Napoleon Pau, with a wink.

"So!" added Grout, "but that is Ferd Gareau playing the lute!"

Pau held up a hand to enjoin silence. A woman was speaking quickly, gayly, and in rippling tones.

"A voice!" said Roussin. "But a woman is there. Who has seen her?"

Heads were generally shaken, for no one had seen.

"Ferd was always the lucky dog," grumbled Grout. "He quaffs the honey now, while we sit here barred away from her."

"I am not sure I like this trip," said Pau, thoughtfully, "Mix man, woman, and mystery, and you get trouble. Trouble is poison. Drink poison, and you die. Die, and you are buried. I would have no woman look on while I row, but if the Northwest Company calls, all the imps in the pit shall not stop me. Long live the Northwesters!—death to the H. B. C.!"

There was an appreciative growl, but Roussin raised a warning finger.

"Not too loud! Remember our orders before we left Garraway. Act as if you had no choice between the two fur-companies, and if you must say a good word for either, favor the H. B. C. We were sworn to that!"

"But," persisted Grout, "why do we carry the bird-throated one?"

There was a disconsolate murmur. Nobody knew, nor could they guess.

David Reith, keenly attentive, had heard all, but gained no information. It was a game in the dark. They were there to serve without knowing why, but they had been told that it was the business of the Northwest Company, and all but himself were willing to serve, even if death kept step at their elbows.

An hour later Gareau came to their side of the camp. He was much like the others, though, having but a small alloy of Indian blood, he had the fancy to claim clear French extraction, and his intelligence helped him along with the pretense.

"Voyageurs," he said, after some unimportant conversation, "you have reason to be proud you are on this trip. We go to make no money, to [illegible] no furs, to do no trading. We go b[illegible]ise" —he plucked off his hat with a rather fine air—"the cause demands it. Vive le Northwest Company!"

A subdued growl of acquiescence came from the voyageurs.

"The Hudson Bay Company seeks to crush us——"

"A bas le H. B. C.!" broke in the voyageurs, like the leap of a panther.

"Good! cried Gareau, delighted with the ferocity he had aroused. "You know the two companies and whom we serve. Our present work is all for the Northwesters. Don't ask me why we go, but be content to wait. This let me say, each man gets four times his usual pay on this trip."

His hearers cheered in subdued intensity.

"And perhaps more; perhaps promotion. Surely, rich reward. Three things you will win—work, danger, and reward. Ask no questions, but obey with docility. It is for the Northwest Company."

The captain said more, handling his companions with the skill of a diplomat, and binding them closer to his cause. When he returned to the boat he left them with food for thought.

David Reith refilled his pipe with pure tobacco. His hand was steady. He lighted and smoked as if at peace, but he knew that if his real part in the expedition was discovered they would try to tear him to pieces in blind rage. When the fur company was to be served a spy could expect nothing better than quick death, and he was a spy then.

What was afoot? Who was the girl? Why was she there? What had she to do with the bitter struggle between the rival companies? Why did men whose business was to trap the beaver, the marten, and the wolf give time in a body to escorting a young woman to the Pacific Ocean? The perplexity was so deep that he could see no light.

All day the party lay waiting. The boatsmen kept to their allotted place, and the other detachment to the boat and tent. When darkness fell the men were summoned to their old places in the craft, and they obeyed promptly. Before them lay toil and struggle, and in the night.

Again veiled, the Goddess was in her place.

"Onward!" commanded Gareau.

Until two o'clock the boatmen plied their oars, first on the Silver Wolf, and then, reaching the great river, on the famous Red. Except for the changing scene, everything was as it had been the previous night. Eight voyageurs bent rhythmically to the blades, Ferdinand Gareau steered, the Indian woman sat stiffly in the bow, and the Goddess kept under cover.

The captain grew less concerned of manner. They had passed that debatable ground where adherents of the Hudson Bay Company were nearly as numerous as the Northwesters, and were in territory largely monopolized by the latter

company. Molestation was far less to be dreaded than formerly, and Gareau was not the man to be daunted by an ordinary peril.

At two o'clock another halt was made. The Red River did not furnish cover equal to that of the previous night, but a small tributary was utilized, and they crept into its grasp.

"Get as much sleep as you need," Gareau said. "We start, tomorrow, at noon. After that we go wholly by day. And, comrades, it will not be long before you can sing your chansons as loud as you please."

The plan of the camp was the same as before. Night passed and the forenoon reached noonward. Then Gareau came to his men again.

"Voyageurs," he said, quietly, "things change from this time on. You know, of course, that we have a lady with us in the boat. She is no longer to be veiled. It is disagreeable to her, and we are now where new conditions prevail. She will be openly seen, and I think all will like her! Do not speak unless she addresses you, but always answer politely and respectfully."

"It shall be so, Captain," promised Martin Derg.

"She is my honored charge. Observe how I act toward her. I am sworn to duty in this case, and so are you; but while I am to entertain her, you will be discreet and make sure that, by silence and good conduct, you win four pounds cash for one. See?"

"We do, Captain."

"Your part is to row the boat."

Gareau hesitated, seemed to want to say more, but not to know how to say it, and wound up by repeating a part of his orders.

Dinner having been eaten, presently, the voyageurs were ordered to prepare the boat. When everything was packed, Life Hand came from camp, and then Gareau and the Goddess followed.

A little murmur rose from the boatmen. Secretly looking at the most interesting member of the party, they found her so much more interesting than their fancy had painted that they really gasped.

She was young; she was finely formed; she was beautiful, full of life, glowing with animation, dainty and smiling; she walked with the light step of the deer and with grace that made comparison feeble.

David Reith felt conflicting emotions running through him. Admiration he felt profoundly, but it was, then, the lesser of two ruling subjects. He was dumfounded that this girl, very refined and delicate as wood-girls went, should be in such company.

Beauty with the beasts, the weak with the strong, innocence with cold-blooded knavery! That was her situation. What was the mystery?

"You will find this day's journey very different, mademoiselle," Gareau was saying, volubly. "You will have the free air, the full freedom of nature. The beautiful sky will be above you, the waters of the great Red below, and the dashing voyageurs to play with the oars. Ah! you will see!"

"Monsieur," replied the Goddess, and her voice was music, "I thank you for giving so much thought to my comfort. Knights of chivalry are not things of the past."

"Merci, mademoiselle! I am as I am. Can I claim praise? No! I was born in France, and my blood is French blood. Long did my ancestors serve under the lilies, long frequent the courts of the reigning sovereigns—but I wander! Pray, mademoiselle, may I help you to your seat in the boat?"

"I thank you, monsieur."

The Goddess was duly seated, and then Gareau gave the word and they went away. A few rods took them to the Red, and its banks rose like walls on each side. Eight oars dipped in water with scarce a ripple, and their bow was toward Lake Winnipeg.

Reith, of the H. B. C. tugged at his oar and meditated. Each stroke took them farther away from the settlements, and farther into the land of solitude and silence. And then, what? Providence knew, but Reith did not.

Ferdinand Gareau had fallen silent. The length of the boat separated him from the Goddess, and there could be no talk that was safe. Loud voices were not to be tolerated on that journey. He had been gay with her, and, now and then, he still smiled, but his face was not always agreeable. A pistol was ready to his hand; he was prepared, at a moment's warning, to use it. Had a man peered over the bank and been recognized as a follower of the H. B. C., Gareau would have shot him dead had he been able.

Until nearly night they rowed, and then camped on a tributary brook at a point not a mile from Lake Winnipeg. Pau, who had a weather eye, looked at the heavens and shook his head.

"I don't like him!" he commented, to Reith. "Catchy sky! Storm? Maybe. Squall? They come quick; can't tell."

Perhaps Gareau saw nothing ominous, and he was gay and talkative that evening. Without being familiar or overattentive, he was very polite and entertaining to the Goddess. He told stories of the fur-land, but never any that were bloodthirsty; he boasted mildly of his alleged noble blood; he softly sang a chanson or two, and, in general, was a good host and entertaining companion.

Reith looked secretly, studied, and was perplexed. He could not understand the Goddess. She seemed unfit for that journey. True, she had strength and endurance, and he believed she was not lacking in courage, but it was clear that she was not bred to life so radically wild, nor accustomed to men like the crew.

Why was she there now? She was amiable, alert, light-hearted, and content. Reith was perplexed to guess what circumstances had made her a willing associate of the fur-men. Looking at her, he thought well of her, but, seeing her gayety, he was staggered. She was manifestly satisfied with her situation. What part had she to play in the mystery that had sent them north?

Gareau no longer had the nervously anxious manner that had before marked him, but he missed no precaution when they lay down to sleep. The tent allotted to the Goddess and old Life Hand was securely anchored; the boat was tied equally fast, and the voyageurs were arranged in a sort of circle on both sides of the brook. When the captain, himself, had lain down before the flap of the tent it appeared to be a well-nigh impregnable camp.

Sleep fell quickly when the various persons courted it, and nobody lost himself quicker than David Reith. Before, his mind had been so busy that he lay

A frowning, hard and pitiless face.

and thought while others slumbered, but it was different this night. Sleeping, he had several hours of repose.

When he awoke it was still dark and quiet. His comrades were motionless. Clouds obscured the sky and darkness was everywhere. Off in the distance a wolf howled, but there were fewer sounds than usual. Beast and bird made no audible motion near at hand. He glanced toward the tent. It showed gray in the darkness. At other points humps told where the voyageurs rested under their blankets.

In all ways it was a peaceful scene, but David was suddenly ill at ease. Men of the lone places have presentiments, feelings of oppression, indefinable impressions like unclassed senses; and the young man had this now. Had he been captain of the boat he would have risen to look about him more fully. As it was, he kept his head in place, but glanced here and there searchingly.

A faint bird-call twittered on the lofty bank. He shot a glance upward. The call had come where silence had been before. Somehow, it seemed out of time and season.

The bank was in black shadow. Bush and rock were there, but he could not distinguish them. The summit showed like the end of an inky line against the cloud-wrapped heavens, with here and there a bush. All this was natural, and his muscles relaxed. In another moment, perhaps, he would have closed his eyes and forgotten his vague impressions, but, suddenly, his still-lifted gaze detected more.

Something moved along the sky-line. A black object, darker than the clouds, rose, became stationary, lingered, and then sank out of sight. David became more keenly alert. It might be nothing out of the ordinary; a skulking wolf, a fox, or, more likely, a beaver, mink, or marten, yet its motions had not been favorable to any such theory. In shape and in size the thing had been like a human head.

David lay motionless and watched the point of interest, but the dark something did not again rise to view. Presently he swept a look to wider range. Nothing walked visible in the night.

He lay near the brook, and the water crept along silently, checked only where it found the boat. Before, it had been as smooth and level as glass; now, he saw something go with the drift. It might have been the end of a log, a bunch of grass, or other natural substance, but he did not incline to that view. Beaver or human? The question was in his mind, and he watched keenly.

Its course was toward the boat, and he saw it draw nearer, quietly, slowly, steadily. No ripple told of swimming, but he had the impression that the water was not over five feet deep. Now it came to the bow of the craft and paused —a circumstance suspicious in itself. A smaller something rose near the larger, and it was strangely like a hand.

Thus far David had seen, and his suspicions of events were receiving fresh strength, when the scene suddenly and violently changed. Ferdinand Gareau, hitherto motionless, leaped to his feet as if with one motion. His tall figure loomed darkly, and David knew he had a pistol in his hand. Lying inactive, Reith glanced toward the water.

The dark object was gone, but there was a decided ripple just beyond the boat. Something was swimming away. The captain flung his hand higher. There was a flash, and his pistol boomed dully.

The voyageurs leaped to their feet almost in unison. Another flash, this time from the top of the bank, and one of Gareau's party clapped his hand to his head with a fierce exclamation. Then nine men stood with drawn weapons, ready for battle.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

BEING IMPARTIAL.

Mrs. Barlow was so essentially a matchmaker that it was impossible for her to see any unattached person without being fired with a desire to find some other unattached person of the opposite sex and approximately suitable age, bring them together and launch them upon the troubled sea of matrimony. That her brother, Tom Hobbs, was still unmarried was due to no lack of energy on her part, for she had quivered for years with a desire to see Tom married and settled.

Consequently, when Tom received her invitation to pass his vacation at her summer home he grinned knowingly. "Wonder what kind of female person she's going to hook me up with this time?" he chuckled to himself.

Being thus prepared in his own mind, he was neither surprised nor disgruntled when he stepped out of the motor car onto his sister's wide front porch to find the wealthy, if no longer strictly youthful, Miss Robbins gracefully postured in a reclining chair. He was somewhat surprised, however, a short time later, when his sister explained with a troubled expression that the extremely prosperous, though slightly passe, Miss Trotter was expected the next day.

"I hadn't planned to have those two girls here at the same time," she fretted, "but Molly Trotter wrote and asked if she might come two weeks earlier than I had intended to have her, and then it was too late to put Miss Ribbins off. I'm afraid it won't be a bit nice or the way I meant to have it."

"Don't worry, old lady," said Hobbs soothingly. "I'll promise to be perfectly impartial."

"But I don't want you to——" began Mrs. Barlow. But Hobbs interrupted her with a shout of laughter.

"Oh, Polly, Polly!" he cried. "You certainly are the prize ostrich."

For the succeeding two weeks Hobbs devoted himself with the greatest assiduity to the two young women. Mrs. Barlow looked on with ill-concealed discomfort, while her brother joyfully took drives and walks and excursions of various kinds with the two "girls."

Mrs. Barlow's spirits rose when for two days running Tom took Miss Robbins out in the motor car, leaving Miss Trotter at home. Miss Robbins looked quite young and radiant when they returned. However, the next day Hobbs and Miss Trotter took a long tramp together through the woods and remained away the whole afternoon. Miss Robbins visibly drooped while they were away, but by bedtime, having passed the preceding half-hour alone with Tom on the east wing of the porch away from the others, she seemed to have quite recovered her spirits.

Thus the days wore away more or less pleasantly until the day before Tom's departure for town. Mrs. Barlow had arranged a beach party and about ten o'clock that morning, being driven to desperation by the numberless accidents which invariably attend the preparations for such festivities, she ferreted Tom out to inform him unreservedly that she considered him a hopeless idiot. Upon being told why, Hobbs assured her that he had proposed to both her other guests and had been rejected by both.

"I told you I would be perfectly impartial," he concluded. Whereupon his sister flounced angrily away.

The beach party was a success in so far as beach parties can be termed successes when participated in by those who have outgrown their keen enjoyment of sand in sandwiches and mosquitoes in coffee. However, as they all sat around the fire after supper there was a distinct atmosphere of hilarity. The middle-aged countenances had begun to assume that expression of pleased anticipation which indicates that home and bed are beginning to loom in sight. It had become quite dark and the scene was lit up only occasionally by a faint glow from the dying fire.

Then Barlow, exhilarated by the lively social converse and ginger ale, suddenly drew out his match safe.

"I never think it's a real picnic unless everybody holds hands. Now, one, two, three, I'm going to find out who's losing his opportunity."

As the match flared up an instant there were two distinct ladylike giggles and what appeared to be a genteel scuffle in the place where Hobbs sat between Miss Robbins and Miss Trotter.

Then the match went out, but not before every one had got full view of the two hands of Hobbs as he raised them aloft. In his right hand squirmed the left hand of Miss Robbins; in his left were the dainty digits of Miss Trotter.

"I always aim to be perfectly impartial," said Hobbs.

"No gentleman could have done such a thing," declared Mrs. Barlow to her brother, a few moments later, as she stalked haughtily beside him back to the house, followed at some distance by her husband, flanked on either side by a statuesque and coldly silent figure. "If any one had told me that a brother of mine could have so far forgotten himself I never would have believed it."

"I'm awfully sorry," murmured Hobbs meekly, "but I'm spontaneous, Polly dear. I really didn't know I was going to do it until it was all over. I'm such a child of nature. I just bubble over with spirits."

"Child of fiddlesticks!" said Mrs. Barlow. "You need a straightjacket and a keeper. Please go on up to bed before the others get here, and I'll be very glad if you can make it convenient to leave before the rest of us get up in the morning. I'll see that breakfast is prepared for you. Otherwise, I wash my hands of you."

Inasmuch as she had washed her hands of him, the news of his engagement to the charming but impecunious daughter of his landlady—which news he wrote to her a few days after his return to town —ought not to have caused her a ripple of unpleasant emotion. Nevertheless it did.

The Issue at Pansyhurst

By EDGAR WHITE

WHEN the boss hiked out for the crocodile country and left Skinny McPheaters in charge of the paper, it didn't take a clarayoyunt to tell that there'd be trouble. What Skinny thinks he knows about running a newspaper would fill all the bookstores in the world, but what he really knows you could get through the eye of a needle, without squeezing.

The Pansyhurst Playball was the only paper in Jackstaff County that amounted to anything. There were two other "also rans" in the county seat, and three or four printed on older presses in the villages. But ours was the paper—the old man said so hisself. If a man wanted office he had to come to us.

Skinny got down early Monday morning and began throwing things about in the editorial room, where I was dusting up.

"Bobby," he says, "we're going to get out some paper while the old man's away, and if you know anything worth printing you're to put me next."

"If the boss had wanted me to play editor," I said, sh-sh-sh, "I guess he'd 'a' said so. As it is I'll let all the responsibility I can carry."

Skinny grinned, and then lit the boss's pipe and set down at his desk. He threw all the exchanges in the coal box; said he wasn't going to scissor anything, but was only going to print original stuff. When Joe Dix, the tramp priat, came in for copy, Skinny handed him a handful of editorial gems and told him to come back for more when he got hungry.

The first caller was Crip Kenesaw, the red-headed night watch. Crip is running for marshal, and he wanted Skinny to give him a "nice little write-up." Skinny wheeled hisself around in the chair, and his leathery face and gimlet eyes began to work like molasses boiling over.

"Crip," says he, "I ain't got no time to write booster stuff for them that wants office. But look-ee here. I'll give you a pointer: Go out and do something. Catch a kidnaper, or a highwayman, or a burglar, or a wife-beater; and then write it up. That's the way to get in the paper, and it's a thousand times better than this gush they write about a man's fitness for office. Do deeds of mightiness, and the facts will speak louder than all the booster notices you could write."

"You mean for me to write 'em myself?" asked Crip, as he took off his beaver and mopped his big red face.

"To be sure," said Skinny, "and then we know we'll have the facts straight."

"And you'll print it just as I write it?" Crip wants to know.

"Of a verity," says Skinny, who had been studying language since the boss left, and was getting the swell-head-offensively.

Before the day was long gone Jack Sleuth, the marshal, who wanted to be re-elected, and Policemen Bill Nixon and Tad Thomas, who wanted Jack's job, all called to see Skinny, and got the same prescription he had administered to Crip. By night there were four daring men pottering around town after villains. No honest man's life or liberty was safe. Crip was the first with a story—true from start to finish, he said, because he was in the middle of it and had written down the details with the accuracy of a funnygraf. Crip, to save Skinny trouble, had put the header on hisself. This was Crip's deed of daring:

DESPERATE CROOK CAPTURED BY NIGHTWATCHMAN KENESAW!

He Was in the Act of Breaking Into a Car of Valuable Merchandise on the Railroad!

Made Threats to Do Up Arresting Officer!

"As midnight was tolling from the courthouse tower last night, Night Officer Crip Kenesaw, who is a candidate for marshal, was investigating about the railroad yards in accordance with his usual careful custom, when he spied a dark form stealing stealthily around a string of merchandise cars.

"'Halt!' cried the officer.

"The outlaw, instead of obeying the command of the night watchman, started to run. The officer fearlessly pursued, revolver in hand. Back and forth the chase led, sometimes over cars, sometimes under them, but never slacking, until finally the robber was run down just opposite French Pete's saloon, where after desperate and determined resistance, he was finally overpowered by Watchman Kenesaw, entirely unaided, and safely lodged in the calaboose. The burglar gave his name as John Brown, but he's undoubtedly lying, as he has the looks of a hardened criminal and is probably wanted in many places. The cars were loaded with valuable merchandise, stoves, farming implements, tombstones and vitrified brick, all consigned to citizens of Pansyhurst.

"Who is the best fighting man?"

"We take pleasure in complimenting Night Watchman Kenesaw for his quick and successful action in this important crime, and for the courage he displayed in trying circumstances. He fears no man. He's just the sort of marshal Pansyhurst needs at this critical stage of her history."

Skinny grinned, O. K.'d the story, and sent it to the printer.

The next modest candidate to call with stuff for the paper was Tad Thomas. Tad wasn't much on the write, and he didn't get in as many inches as Crip, but what there was of it was good.

Here's what Tad run across:

"While a herd of long-horn cattle was being driven through town Tuesday afternoon, one of the animals took down a side street, and run at a furious rate, regardless of people and carriages.

"Everybody climbed trees or run in their houses and shut their doors. At that appalling crisis Policeman Tad Thomas, with characteristic promptness, appeared on the scene with a rope. In his earlier days Mr. Thomas was a rancher in Wyoming, and the roping of steers was his daily habit. The officer had no horse, but just then Major Reynolds appeared in his auto. The situation was quickly explained, the officer jumped into the forward seat, rope in hand, and the chase began. It was of short duration, as the big machine speedily bore down upon the dangerous beast, the rope spun out, and presto! The animal was lying harmless on the ground. A hundred citizens witnessed the brave act and cheered the plucky officer. What Pansyhurst needs as its marshal is a man who is afraid of nothing, and is ready and willing at all times to do his duty. Such a man is the gallant Tad Thomas, candidate for marshal of Pansyhurst. See announcement columns."

Jack Sleuth wrote about the way he had rounded up a desperate gang of crap-shooters. Every one of 'em had a knife or a gun, but Jack walked in on 'em single-handed and alone, and corralled the whole bunch, without the effusion of blood.

"What Pansyhurst needs right now, more than at any time in her history," wrote Jack, "is a man who has the nerve to face a gang of outlaws and make 'em lay down like Marshal Sleuth did Wednesday night. We are happy to announce to the citizens of Pansyhurst that the marshal has yielded to the importunities of his many friends, and will be a candidate for re-election."

Bill Nixon caught a firebug red-handed, back of the hotel, where he was lighting a match. Up in court the man said he had dropped a quarter, and was looking for it, but Bill wouldn't take any talk of that kind from a stranger. Then the man got mad, and this made Bill sure he was right. "After a desperate encounter," in which he disarmed the firebug of a couple of matches, a bunch of keys and some chewing tobacco, Bill got his man in jail, where he had to stay until his friends came from another State, and said he wasn't no firebug, but a respectable man who was selling things on the road.

Then the nigger porter said he had found the quarter in the morning after the arrest. But Bill's story was in print before the alaby witness got in, so it didn't hurt nobody but the stranger, and that didn't amount to anything, because he didn't live here.

The people of Pansyhurst knew what to look out for, so they kept off the streets after night, but it was tough on the traveling public. The candidates for marshal were no respecters of persons. They was just as likely to round up a preacher as anybody else if he didn't look just right to 'em. They was out after copy, and all was fish that come in their net.

Skinny set back in his chair and laffed with Satanic glee as he read the stuff his assistant editors was handing in. I had a mind to telegraff the old man how he was doing. Once I spoke to Daddy Muff, the old foreman of our shop, about it, but Daddy told me if I could induce the good Lord to forgive me for my own sins, Skinny would look out after his. You see Skinny was dividing all the cigars and wedding cake that came to the office with Dad, and that's why Dad stood up for him in his crime.

The convention was held Tuesday night at the city hall, and I went up with the balance of the gang to see which of them four brave officers was going to get the nomination. In the Playball we always call Pansyhurst "our city," same as they do in St. Louis, New York, and Jerusalem, but it ain't as big as them places—not quite. We got five wards, and waterworks, and electric street lights that does pretty good when the moon comes out and helps.

The convention wasn't neither Republican or Democrat. It was just the people, the bills said, and whoever was nominated at that convention would be elected, because no opposition ticket would be run.

Joe Murphy, who runs the Beehive restaurant and pool hall, was chairman, and they made Skinny secretary, thinking he could spell, I reckon. Skinny set at a table, with a two-for-a-nickel cigar in his mouth, his coat off, and sleeves rolled up. He didn't have nothing to do but look wise, but from the way he acted you'd a thought the convention couldn't 'a' run without him.

The candidates for mayor, city attorney, and police judge was all put in by acclymation and "cheers and applause," as Skinny put it in the paper, and then Joe said:

"The next thing in order will be the nomination of a candidate for marshal."

Joe's a great big man with a awful black mustache and a red necktie with a pin that flashes like a Arkansaw diamond. He was the boss of his ward, and had the best bird dog in town.

Old Lawyer Boggs got up and nominated our "esteemed fellow townsman, Mr. Crip Kenesaw, a man tried and never found wanting."

When Crip's rooters quit Toney Anspaugh, the hardware man, put up Jack Sleuth, "a man who has served one term and asks another on the splendid record he has made." (Cheers by Jack's heelers.)

Sandy Thompson, the tombstone man, put a bid in for Bill Nixon, and Daddy Muff, our foreman, made a little spiel for Tad Thomas, who was a member of Daddy's Sunday school class, and, therefore Daddy said he was bound to be a good marshal.

"Are all the nominations in?" says Joe, pounding with his gavel. "If there ain't any more, the nominations will close, and we'll proceed to ballot on the four gentlemen whose names we have before us."

Skinny looked over to where the "bloody third warders" was a-setting and winked.

"Mr. Chairman!"

Baldy Ryan, head blacksmith at the wagon works, was a standing magestikally among the "bloody third."

"Mr. Ryan," said Joe in graceful acksents.

"If it be in order I would like to ask the four men nominated for marshal," says Baldy, "to line up in front where this convention can get a square look at 'em."

"A good suggestion," said Joe; "if there's no objection the nominees will come forward."

The convention then began calling for the marshals. There was no help for it, so they came forward, and stood there grinning and blushing and hunting for some place to put their hands and feet. They didn't look like the kind of heroes you read about—not the kind of reading I do. The crowd laffed, and this made the candidates redder than ever.

Baldy Ryan borrowed a pair of eyeglasses from Lawyer Boggs and walked up and began squinting through 'em at the candidates. Baldy's got an eye like an eagle, and didn't need no glasses, and everybody knew it. So they laffed till they had a misery in their sides—all but Baldy. He looked like his profession was the embalming of Egyptian mummies.

"Mr. Chairman," said Baldy, when he got through looking, "may I request these men to remain standing while I say a few remarks?"

"You may, Mr. Ryan," said Joe; "it ain't midnight yet."

Then Baldy pulled a long book out of his inside coat pocket, and after fumbling with some papers in it, found something that seemed to interest him. He put up his nose glasses, went to the clerk's light, and began to read. What he read was clippings from The Pansyhurst Playball about what them four brave men had done—their "deeds of mightiness," as Skinny called 'em.

The singing of a dirge was a joyful anthem alongside the way Baldy read them stories the candidates had writ about theirselves, and the solemner Baldy got the louder the convention laffed. The four candidates squirmed and twisted like garter snakes when you tread on 'em, and would have run away, but the crowd stood up behind 'em and wouldn't let 'em out. I looked at Skinny, who was the cause of all the agony, and he was setting there grinning like a death's head. The miserable low-down sneak knew all the time that everybody who read them silly pieces would know the candidates wrote 'em theirselves.

When Baldy finished reading the booster notices, and the convention was a-roaring fit to kill itself, he suddenly turned around to 'em and said:

"Now, gentlemen, you will see what the issue for this important office of marshal is: courage, manliness, a willingness to meet the law-breaker, and the ability to subdue him. In other words, it says here, your marshal must be a fighting man. And I accept the issue as laid down by these able conservers of our peace.

"Pansyhurst must have for its marshal the next two years the best fighting talent we have in town. Now comes the question: How are we to demonstrate that so we will make no mistake? Who is the best fighting man in Pansyhurst? Is he among these four candidates or elsewhere? I can't answer the question to your satisfaction perhaps, but I've got $200——" here he began fumbling in the long pocketbook again, and pulled out a roll of bills so big it made me dizzy to look at 'em—"I say I've got $200 here

that says little Tim O'Hara, who works in my blacksmith shop, is the best qualified man in town for marshal of Pansyhurst, and that he'll prove it right now, if the convention can be at ease for fifteen minutes—I say Tim will prove it with gloves, bare fists or shillalahs, and may Mars defend the right! Mr. Chairman, I nominate for the office of marshal of Pansyhurst Mr. Timothy O'Hara of the third ward."

Everybody knew Tim. He was a little runt of an Irishman, but he had an arm on him like the piston rod of a class S-2 steam engine, and he could move it as swift and hard. I seen him one time wade into a crowd of hoboes that was throwing rocks at the school and lay out six of 'em. The others run away. But he never got into a scrap unless somebody tread on the tail of his coat, and yet he had been in more fights than any ten men in town. The reason was that fellows got fooled by his size, and thought he was soft.

It was awful embarrassing to the candidates. It didn't look regular to them, and old Lawyer Boggs started to say something, when Skinny got up and moved that "the convention accept Mr. Ryan's proposition."

"This is a people's convention," says Skinny, "and we want to give everybody a fair show. We have five men in nomination, and the issue before the house is their fighting qualities. I cannot conceive of any better method of selecting a candidate than in trying out the issue as proposed by Mr. Ryan."

Then Mr. Boggs went over to Crip and began whispering something, but Crip shook his head. The friends of the others gathered around 'em and had a talk. This went on for about fifteen minutes. We was all wondering which one would be the first for a ten-round go with Tim, who set in a corner, the most meek and unconcerned man there. Finally the chairman rapped for order.

"Gentlemen," he said, "please be quiet a few moments. Mr. Boggs has an announcement to make."

Mr. Boggs said that while he appreciated the fairness of the proposition as suggested by Mr. Ryan, and was confident that if put to the test his man Crip could make mincemeat out of Tim, yet it unfortunately happened that evening Crip was suffering from an attack of the grip, and was not in condition to show what he really could do in the fighting line. Therefore, by permission of the convention, he would withdraw the name of Mr. Crip Kenesaw.

Tony Anspaugh said he'd take Jack Sleuth out of the ring because Jack had been up all night the night before chasing tramps, and wasn't fit to show just what he could do, like he might if given a fair chance.

Sandy Thompson saved Bill Nixon's face by explaining that Bill had his right hand bitten by a maddog he was trying to kill so as to keep him from biting the good people of Pansyhurst.

Daddy Muff was the only honest one of the lot. He said his man, Tad Thomas, wouldn't go against Tim O'Hara because he knew Tim could lick him, and that if the best fighting man was to be the test for the nomination he moved that it be given to Tim by acclymation. This set the convention wild. Everybody cheered for Daddy Muff and Tim O'Hara, and after Tim was nominated they called on him to make a speech. Here's where they had Tim going—he could sooner fight a mountain lion than talk to a room full of people. I guess it was about the first time Tim was ever scared at anything in his life, but Baldy Ryan was wise to the drift of things, so he got up and says:

"Gentlemen, Tim had appointed me his speechmaker, and he wants me to thank you all for the confidence you have shown in nominating him to this important office. And he says after your deliberations is over if you'll go with him down to the shop he'll give you one of the fanciest exhibitions of bag-punching you ever seen since you was born, and then we'll all adjourn to some nearby refreshment parlor and have some—er—ice cream."

Next morning the four candidates what had pulled out called to see Skinny, but he had gone on a visit to see his grandmother.

Alice Clement, Detective

FITTING CRIME TO EVIDENCE

By COURTNEY R. COOPER

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(Editor's Note—On the payroll of the municipal detective department of the city of Chicago appears the name of Alice Clement, sleuth. To the trackers of men who make their headquarters at the bureau at 179 North La Salle street, she is known as "Alice of the Smile." Fearless, resourceful, dangerous in a hundred simple little disguises which mask her, yet do not hinder her, she has found the evidence which has sent many a man and many a woman to the penitentiary. There is hardly a dangerous dive of the great city which she, in her twelve years of detective life, has not visited. More than once has she been compelled to use the dirk or the revolver that she carries for protection. And yet, through it all, she has remained pretty, vivacious, full of life and the love of living—and always deserving of her name, "Alice of the Smile." Too, she has always remained reticent, non-communicative about her adventures, until Mr. Cooper persuaded her to tell her adventures for the first time.)

WE WERE aboard a rattling "L" train. Miss Alice Clement, free for the day from her work of tracking criminals, was making a few little notes in the memorandum she always carries. I was watching the roofs as they whirled past. Neither of us had spoken for some time.

At last, I ceased my occupation of idleness to turn to the little woman, and found her staring absently ahead. The little note book was closed and clasped in her hands.

"Well?" I asked at last.

"Just thinking, that's all," she answered. "This is a little anniversary with us."

"Birth, marriage, or death?" I jested.

"The last," the answer came. "It's the anniversary of my first murder case. I don't have those very often, you know. In fact, it's only when I stumble into a thing of that kind that I am allowed to take any interest in it. But, then, in this case I could do as I pleased, for I was not working on the force under orders."

She glanced up at me with a twinkle in her eyes. "Sometimes it's good not to be working under orders," she said. "A person can take any risks that are to be taken, and do just what seems best—even if it turns out all wrong. And it's really nice to know that."

Miss Clement looked rather hastily around to see that no other passengers were near us. Then, turning the little notebook playfully about in her hands, she smiled to herself.

"A person never knows what's going to ensue from the smallest kind of happening," she began. "My case came from waiting for a car. You see, that was in the days before I went on the police force regularly, and I was selling candy for a living. Every evening I would take my car for home from one of the corners in the loop district, near the office of an afternoon paper. It would be just about time for the last editions to come out, and it was a favorite diversion of mine to watch the circling, yelling newsboys as they hurried in every direction from the building, each in a contest of who could sell the first paper. And watching this way one night I stumbled onto my undiscovered crime."

"Your what?" I interrupted.

"The undiscovered crime. Any big city is full of them. Not that they remain undiscovered for all time, because they don't. Some little thing will always give the criminal away. It may be even the crooking of a finger at the wrong time. In this case it was the buying of a paper.

"For three nights I had seen him, a shifty-eyed, heavy-browed man, who seemed to lurk in the shadows of the building in wait for the whirring of the presses. At the first shout of the newsboys he would dart forth, hand out his penny, buy his paper, and then scan the first page. Once in a while he would look inside; not often. It did not impress me so much the first night, nor even the second. But the third I began to wonder a little about the person, what his motive was in being so anxious to get his paper, and why he should read only the first page, then throw it away.

"I spent a night wondering about that man, and then things began to form themselves in my brain. I determined to watch him. It was none of my business, I knew that. I had no right to play detective and to take chances—but I guess when the desire to hunt persons gets into one's heart, there isn't anything that will take it out. I like to discover things; I was always a person to be finding out, finding out, and so—well, I started in to learn what the gentleman with the shaggy eyebrows had in mind when he bought his paper every night and then quickly threw it away.

"The next day I reported to the candy company that I was ill, and that I didn't believe I would be down to work for several days. Then, that night, there appeared at the newspaper corner a poor woman, dressed in clothing that was out of date, a bit lame, and not very good of sight. Incidentally that same person was myself. I had started on my work of finding out the message of the newspaper. I had hired a girl for a few days to take care of my little kiddie out at the flat; I had kissed the child a long goodby, in case my passion for detective work should carry me away from her forever, and now I was ready for anything.

"The homegoing crowds began to jam the street cars. Dusk had come, then darkness. Fifteen minutes I waited, twenty, and then from the basement I heard the whirring of the presses. A few moments later, there came the shouting newsboys, and with their first appearance my heart gave a leap. Seemingly from nowhere my man appeared, pushed forth his penny, clutched his paper, and was greedily scanning the front page. I watched him as he threw the paper to the pavement and turned down the street. Then I followed.

"This time there was something beside me to receive him."

"It was a long road we traveled, down Fifth avenue, then turning and crossing the river, past old commission houses and into the tenement district of the city. Sneaking along in the shadows, I saw him enter a dark stairway. I started to follow, then stopped. The building, on the upper floor, I had noticed, was occupied on one side by a small manufacturing concern, a sweatshop, probably. Then he must have his room somewhere on the other side. I hurried into the alley next to the building and watched. Soon a light appeared in a window on the fourth floor, to shine dimly a moment, then fade as a curtain was pulled. I strained my eyes at the shadow. I was sure he was the one I was following, and that I had located his room.

"That night the house took a new lodger, one who preferred to live on the fourth floor, where the light was a trifle better. She was a poor woman, but at that she managed to pay her first week's rent in advance."

Alice Clement smiled as she said this, and I could not help wondering at the courage of this bright-eyed little woman, slight, pretty, young-appearing, a woman who seemed of the type that lives for petting and for easy luxury, instead of the grueling life that one must undergo when stalking crime. The "L" train had stopped for the transfer from local to express trains at Indiana avenue. Miss Clement waited until the whirring of the wheels began again before she took up her narrative once more.

"It isn't a usual thing for a man to buy papers like that," she said. "And that was the reason I had become so interested in him. What was it that he desired to see? What was it that he was constantly fearful might come forth every day—what was it that impelled his curiosity to watch the very latest edition of papers, that he must know what was happening up to the very last minute? The thoughts gnawed my brain. There was no particular unsolved murder mystery just at that time. There had been no very great robberies. As I sat in my little room, looking at the faded, torn wall paper and the miserable furnishings, I dissected the whole thing, piece by piece. That man was a criminal, I felt sure of it. He had done something which as yet had not been found out. His conscience was hurting him. The thought of a crime, weighing down upon his brain, was driving him night after night out into the open, to learn if possible if the world had yet learned of his guilt. Yes, I was sure of all that; but to prove it was a different matter. A criminal, forced to the wall, is a hard person to deal with. I had nothing by which a lead of attack might be made. There was nothing that he could be accused of. There was only one thing to do—wait and play spy.

"That night, as the hours grew late, I sneaked into the hall and stealthily approached the door. There, in the shadow, just around the corner from where a dingy hall light threw its feeble rays against the overpowering darkness, I knelt, hour after hour, listening at the keyhole. But no word, no sound, came from within. There was no movement from the man within the room, nothing that would indicate that he was suffering from the thoughts of a crime. I went back to my room and went to sleep.

"The next night it was the same. There must be a new plan.

"The following day, gauging my time so that I felt sure he would be at the newspaper office, I tried my keys on the door. They all failed. Then, following apparent failure, there entered hope. The door of the room next went open to my touch. I saw that it was vacant. I felt the walls; they were almost nothing. I saw that by judicious use of a sharp knife I could have a hole through the connecting one within a half-hour. I set to work."

The "L" train had stopped for a moment, and with it stopped Miss Clement's narrative. Then, as the motorman shot the lever around on the controller, it began again.

"When my man returned that night, he was being watched by two eyes that were tireless. I had stationed myself in that little room, locked and bolted the door, and was at the tiny hole I had made in the wall. I felt sure that it would not be noticed. I was willing, anyway, to take the chance.

"He came into the room somewhat wildly. His face was set, he seemed nervous. Hurriedly he walked to the small cupboard and took from it a box containing some white powder—a cocaine fiend! Then, almost stealthily, he paced around the room, to take out at last some letters from a desk, and seated himself by the light. I could see that the paper was old and dirty. The letters evidently had been read and re-read a thousand times.

"I stood at that hole in the wall spellbound. The man before me was changing in every bit of his nature. The shifty, nervous expression had left his eyes now. As he read line after line of the missive he held in his hand, his eyes grew steely and cold and glaring. Now and then the lips seemed to part in a snarl. The blood surged to his cheeks, then left it. The hands trembled. The man beneath my gaze was turning animal.

"At last he rose, and, with the letters clasped tight in his hands, he began to pace the floor. Once or twice he raised his hands as if to tear the letters into bits; then, with a smothered exclamation, he threw them far from him, and stood trembling. A moment later he was on the floor hastily, hurriedly lifting an edge of the worn carpet. A picture came forth. I saw that it was the photograph of a man. I knew that it was time for action.

"Out of the room I crept, turning the lock in the door with the softness of vel-

vet. Then down the hall I hurried and into the street. A patrolman was near. I recognized him.

"'Malloy,' I said, 'I want you to make an arrest and take the credit for it. Will you do it?'

"He went into the house with me, and then, once in the hall, hid himself in the shadows near the door. I knocked—once, twice, three times. I heard a slight movement within the room—I knew that the man was hiding his cocaine, his letter, and the picture. I waited. At last the door opened, and the peering face stared out at me.

"'Well?' he asked.

"I walked into the room, almost past his outstretched hand. I sat down near the door. With eyes that were nervous, I saw him reach to turn the key again in the lock as he shut the door. Then there came a feeling of great thanksgiving as he at last refrained, walked past me with puzzled look and sat down near the window.

"'Well?' he asked again. 'What is it?'

"'You don't remember me?'

"He seemed to puzzle a moment.

"'No,' he answered at last.

"'I lived next door to you.'

"'Where?' He shot the question at me with a queer jerk of his voice. Hastily I rose, walked to the door, looked out, and then returned to my seat.

"'We'd better not mention names or streets,' I said in a lowered voice. I felt that my hand was gripping my revolver with extreme tightness. 'There are too many that will hear; you know why.'

"The man's face across from mine had turned pale for a moment, and then a stillness had come over it. The eyes seemed immovable as they gazed straight at me.

"'I don't know what you are talking about,' came the denial from his lips. 'Talk all you want to. Name everything you want to. I know of no reason for quiet——'

"'Don't you?' I allowed my face to go stern and I leaned forward a bit. 'Are you sure of that?'

"He shifted in his chair.

"'Look here,' he began, 'what in——'

"'Not so loud,' I interrupted. 'Even if you are going to play the fool, I'm not. I'm here to help you. They've found out.'

"'What?' He was on his feet now, staring at me. 'What have——'

"'They've found the body. I knew they would. I tried to keep them away from there as long as I could, but they would go in—and when they did, they found it. The neighbors——'

"The face turned livid now.

"'What are you talking about?' he asked hoarsely. 'Who are you? What are you doing here? What do you mean when you say that you tried to——'

"I had interrupted him with a gesture. I was on my feet now, too, pointing a finger at him.

"'You know what I am talking about,' I hurled at him. 'You know as well as I do that you killed her. You know when the quarrel was, after you had found his letter to her and his picture! You know! You thought that no one saw you, but there was one, and that one was myself!'

"'You——!'

"'Wait!' I ordered. 'I am not here to harass you. I'm here to save you. The police are trailing you. They've gotten a description of you from some one around the newspaper offices, some one who has seen you buying papers every night to see if the news of the killing had come out. You fool! Why didn't you get out of town when you had the chance? Didn't you know that some one would see you and recognize you—and wonder what was wrong? You've got to leave town now, and leave quick. They'll trail you here; there won't be a chance of escape. You'll swing, that's all.'

"A cry broke in on me. Hands outstretched, fingers claw-like, the crazed man stood before me. I quailed before him. I half drew the revolver from my pocket. Then came the outburst.

"'Swing?' he asked, wildly. 'You mean that I'll be hanged—hanged for that? I didn't kill her intentionally—I just meant to strike her with the dull side of the knife, to scare her. It turned in my hand and caught her jugular—I didn't mean to do it!' The voice was almost screaming now. 'I ought to have killed her!' he added, with a quick change of demeanor. 'I ought to have! She deserved it. She'd been deceiving me for three years. All the time I thought she was true to me she was meeting Withers. She was in love with him. They were planning to run away—and I found out. I stopped her! If they hang me they'll have to hang him, too, that's all. He's just as guilty as I am. He stole her away from me, he stole her—'

"He stopped. His lips trembled. His eyes went wilder than ever, then closed. His arms covered his face. He was sobbing, sobbing just like some great child. For a moment he stood wavering, staggered a few steps—then straightened.

"His eyes caught the motion of the door as I closed it. I had softly opened it and waved a hand outside—the signal.

"With a rush he came toward me.

"'What did you open that door for?' he asked.

"'You're mistaken——'

"'I saw you when you started to shut it. You signaled to somebody. Then you're not a friend, eh? You're a detective? You came in here to get everything you could out of me, did you? Well, you've done it, but you're not going to——'

"Again he rushed forward, but this time there was something beside me to receive him. It was the hulking form of Tom Malloy, whose great arms outstretched and crushed the maniacal man before me as though he was a small boy.

"'What's the matter with th' boob?' Tom asked, as we called the wagon. I told him.

"'But keep me under your hat,' I begged. 'I'm only a candy saleslady, you know, Tom, and right now I need my job.'

"'Sure, and he walked right up to me in the street and confessed, he did,' grinned Tom. 'I'll search th' gent's room and find out a few things about him before I talk to the captain. I'll book him for investigation until then. Ah, Tommy's th' wise boy.'

"And sure enough he was," added Miss Clement, as she finished her story. "He got into the man's room, found out his address, went out to the house, discovered the body in the basement, with the throat cut from ear to ear, and then made his report. And I, well, I went back to work the next morning and told the boss what a terrible time I had been having with headaches. It's a mighty bad thing to have the detective instinct when you're selling candy."

"Lexington avenue," shouted the "L" guard. "Madison the next stop. Watch your step, everybodie-e-e-e, watch your step!"

"New man on the job," mused Miss Clement as we left the train. "He talks too plain for an old-timer."

Next week's Ledger will contain another of these strange, true stories of Chicago's famous woman sleuth. This remarkable series will run for several weeks, giving Ledger readers some of Alice Clement's most thrilling exploits. Do not miss any of them.

With the Assistance of Fate

HAT'S the trouble?" demanded Mrs. Briney.

Almost any wife would have felt justified in asking the question. Briney sat hunched over in his chair surveying his feet and glaring at them. The feet were incased in new brown shiny leather slippers and to the casual observer were trim enough to merit something better than a glare.

"I don't like 'em!" Mr. Briney told her, emphatically. Mrs. Briney laid down her sewing and compressed her lips and breathed hard, the way a woman does when she sees ahead of her the task of bringing enlightenment to the mind of an ignorant child or a purblind man.

"Why, Henry Briney!" she got out at last. "You just bought those slippers a week ago! You must think you are made of money! If you liked them then why shouldn't you like them now? You act like a small boy! What's wrong with them?"

"I just don't like 'em," persisted Briney with guilty defiance. "And I won't wear things I don't like! I'll have to get some new ones, I guess!"

"I guess not," said his wife, firmly and sweetly. "There's no use talking, Henry, you need a manager! It's just a few dollars here and a few dollars there that count! You might be a rich man today if you had paid attention to the little things! Those slippers fit, don't they?"

"Oh, I suppose so," admitted Briney reluctantly, wiggling his toes. "I think this one is a little too big right here, though. And——"

"And there's nothing wrong with the color or style," pursued his wife, relentlessly. "It's sheer nonsense just because you've taken an unaccountable freak that you should throw aside a perfectly good pair of slippers. Why would you say if I acted like that, I'd like to know?"

"Women," said Mr. Briney, "haven't much sense about things, after all. Just to save a few paltry dollars you would have me suffer every time I wore the blamed things! If I dislike anything you know I can't endure having it around. It is worth more to my peace of mind to blow a little money than to save it! If I wore these slippers every evening I was at home I'd be cross and uncomfortable and that would disturb my rest. And the next day I'd be in no fit condition for business and would probably lose a thousand dollar contract! I'd like to know where would be the economy in that!"

"You might just as well say that if the coffee was bad it would infuriate you so that you'd go out on the street and slay the first man you met and be hanged for it," said Mrs. Briney. "You are perfectly foolish. If I were you I'd resign myself to wearing those slippers till their period of usefulness was over and then talk about getting new ones!"

"What do you call the limit of a period of usefulness?" queried Briney, interestedly.

"What do you suppose?" snapped Mrs. Briney. "When it's impossible to wear them any longer, of course! I never saw such a fuss made over a small thing in my life!"

"I suppose," said Briney in majestic displeasure, "that my discomfort is a small thing! You don't care how it irritates me to wear the confounded things!"

"I'd have better control of my nerves," retorted Mrs. Briney. "I wouldn't let a pair of slippers spoil my life!"

"I don't intend to," said Briney, emphatically.

"Well, if you go and buy new ones," said his wife, "you can just hand over the same amount of money to me to be spent foolishly! Hard up as you are, too!"

"Oh, I suppose I could go on wearing 'em!" said Briney gloomily.

He was leaning over gazing at the hated footgear. Then he learned back in his chair, yawned, stretched himself, lost his balance and keeled over backwards. As his head went down his feet flew up. But more things were flying than his feet. One of the slippers shot through the air and with the precision of a bullet

"You are perfectly foolish."

landed in the middle of the glowing coals in the fireplace. As he waved his legs wildly in an effort to regain his balance the other slipper careened and followed suit. An odor of burning leather filled the air.

Briney, sitting on the floor holding his aching head, on which a huge bump already was beginning to swell, looked at his wife. "I guess," he said, "that their period of usefulness is what you might call over, isn't it?"

"I'd never believe in a thousand years that you didn't do it on purpose," said Mrs. Briney sternly. "Not even the whack on the head with you got would convince me! Never! It takes a man to get his own way!"

"I think," said Briney, "that I'll get red ones this time!"

* * *

Henry's Good Conduct.

Peck was honestly glad when Mrs. Peck and the little Pecks left for their month's visit in the country.

Mrs. Peck, frugal soul, allowed herself fifteen dollars a week out of Henry's salary to run the house on. Fifteen dollars had to do, though the increased cost of supporting the predatory interests, together with an occasional unexpected and wholly unforeseen expense, necessitated the spreading of that allowance rather thin at times. To be sure, Henry almost always had a quarter or so saved from his allowance, and she could and did call upon him sometimes when the pinch grew a trifle too tight.

She magnificently allowed Henry a whole dollar every week for spending money and carfare. As his carfare never amounted to more than sixty cents a week Henry was always left with forty cents to spend in riotous living. The rest of Henry's salary went to swell the family's account in the savings bank.

The fair, gentle or occasional unexpected reader, as the case may be, should not hastily form the opinion that Mrs. Peck was stingy. Almost any old friend of the Peck family could get invited to stay to dinner at the Pecks' if he happened to come before dinner and remained long enough.

Mrs. Peck allowed Henry three dollars a week for living expenses and carfare during her absence in the country. When one considers just how far and thin so large a sum may be spread out three dollars is seen to be a liberal allowance.

Henry proved himself even a better spreader than Mrs. Peck had dreamed that he would be. At the baker's he discovered an overgrown species of Vienna roll which could be purchased for fifteen cents a dozen, and two of these rolls and a bowl of milk—he used a quart of milk a day at eight cents a quart—made a meal. On Sundays he purchased a can of soup, which, when properly diluted, made six portions, and six portions of soup at ten cents made Sunday a day to look forward to. He knew a place where he could get for lunch a generous-sized sandwich and a cup of near coffee for ten cents. Henry found he could easily live and still have a jingling balance of seventy-nine cents at the end of the week.

But there are always unforeseen and unexpected drains on one's resources. The first evening he was alone in the silent house Henry was lonesome. The cat, which had fasted all day, cried at the door most pitifully. Henry did not take into consideration the fact that the cat was hungry; he thought the cat was lonesome like himself. This thought affected him so stronly that he admitted the cat to the house just for the sake of companionship. Then while Henry prepared his generous supper of rolls and milk the cat went into the sittingroom and ate the canary.

Henry found the next day that he could buy for two dollars a canary just like the one which had met with the catastrophe, but he decided that he would not buy one until the last week of the family's absence; that would give him time to save the cost of the bird, and he told himself that there was no use having the bird in the house eating its head off all that time. It was better to let the bird dealer be under the expense of feeding it until Henry got ready for it.

One of the best stories Henry had ever heard was that of the man who came home at three o'clock in the morning. When his wife asked him what time it was, he told her it was just 11. Then he had to stand up there in the dark and say "Cuckoo!" eight times when the cuckoo clock tried to tell her the truth. The thought of that unlucky man standing in the dark and cooperating with the cuckoo clock used to fill Henry's heart with glee. That was before his wife went to the country. He never thought it possible then that he himself could be guilty of similar duplicity.

Early in the first week of Mrs. Peck's absence, however, Henry was invited by another summer widower to attend a poker party at the latter's house. It was an enjoyable occasion. The host furnished sandwiches with real meat in them! Also Henry quit the game fifteen cents winner and got back to his own home at six o'clock in the morning—in time for breakfast. But he was horrified to see the slats in the blinds of a window in the house next door move slightly as he turned into his yard!

Here was an alarming situation. That Henry had been seen rolling home at six o'clock in the morning was the first thing Mrs. Peck would hear on her return. All that day he was distrait. Then the great idea struck him!

The next morning Henry rose at five o'clock and walked briskly away from home for half an hour. Then he turned and walked briskly back. And he did the same thing every other morning until his family returned.

The longest vacation comes to an end. Along toward the last of that lonely month, in order to appreciate his rolls and milk Henry had to pretend that he was a sailor shipwrecked on a desert island and that he had been without food for six days. By pretending hard enough he could make the bowl of sloppy food seem like a four-course dinner.

Mrs. Peck and the children arrived in the night. At five the next morning Henry ostentatiously rolled out of bed and began to dress.

"What in the world——" began Mrs. Peck.

"Oh, I discovered," lied Henry, "that I'm getting too stout, so I have been getting up at five o'clock every morning and taking an hour's walk in order to train down."

"You come back to bed," commanded Mrs. Peck. "You are not going to indulge in that kind of foolishness now that I am home. Do you think we can afford to wear out shoes in that fashion? I don't think we'll get much breakfast this morning. How would you like some rolls and milk? What did you say?"

"I didn't say a word."

But Henry did give the window of the house next door a barefaced and insolent grin as he started for the car that morning.

Laurestine's Reward

Or, MRS. VANE'S REVENGE

By AGNES DOROTHY OTTO

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CHAPTER VIII.

FOR several days after the encounter with Mrs. Vane and Stanley Markham Laurestine waited at the fallen tree for her friend. But when the fourth day came and no Gerald, her eyes filled with tears.

"He is angry," she thought, "because that horrid woman said something about me. Perhaps he believed that man when he said I am kind to him when I meet him alone. Oh, how I wish I had told Gerald that I had never met him alone, and I never hope to, because I am afraid of him."

There was very little excuse for Laurestine to go to the hotel, for very nearly all the summer guests were leaving. The hunting party had returned, and everybody was packing to go. Most of the cottages were closing. Mrs. Vane's ball was the last event of the season.

But Laurestine was determined to find Gerald and explain. So she picked up her basket and returned to the hotel. She passed Millicent on the drive. The child had always looked upon the beautifully dressed girl with feelings of awe. Now she noticed that the proud young lady looked pale and angry.

She approached Laurestine, and her lips moved as though she were going to speak; but seeming to think better of it, she turned her head hastily and walked on. Laurestine looked timidly at the haughty figure, and a moment later entered the hotel. The cashier, a kind-hearted woman with very little romance in her practical make-up, looked compassionately at the appealing face of Laurestine, as she inquired for Gerald Worthing.

Through Gerald's enemies the story of his quarrel with Millicent had been ignominiously circulated, and the cashier knew of the rumor, but the woman had known Laurestine for years, and was very fond of the quiet, modest little girl. That was the reason she encouraged the child to sell her wares inside the hotel. So the exaggerated story had no influence on her better judgment. She was naturally curious, however, to hear Laurestine's account of the story.

In order to do that, she would have to tell the girl what she had already heard. And to her credit, she resisted an impulse to satisfy her curiosity. "Mr. Worthing went away four days ago," she told Laurestine; and when the big blue eyes filled with tears the good woman wondered if after all Mr. Worthing had not been putting foolish notions in the child's head.

"Oh," sobbed Laurestine, "he didn't say good-by to me."

The cashier looked gravely at the distressed girl. "Mr. Worthing went suddenly, and he didn't say good-by to me, and I'm his friend, too," she said, watching Laurestine's face keenly.

"But there is something I should have explained to him. A gentleman told him something about me, and I didn't contradict it because I thought Gerald would understand. And now I am afraid he believed it and is angry with me."

The cashier had given a start of surprise when Laurestine used Worthing's first name. But her belief in the child was firmly planted, and she listened attentively. When Laurestine asked for Mr. Worthing's address the woman thought a few words of advice would not be amiss. So she said:

"I will give you his address in New York on condition that you get your grandmother's consent to write to him. But tell me, my dear, do you call Mr. Worthing Gerald when you are talking to him? Because it does not sound respectful in a little girl."

Laurestine's eyes expanded and her lips quivered. "That is what he told me to call him. He said all his friends called him Gerald."

"Well, my dear Laurestine," said the sensible woman, "don't think any more about it. I am sure Mr. Worthing is not angry with you. Men like him make friends wherever they go, and they can't keep track of them all. I dare say, he will forget me, too, and we have been good friends all summer. He used to chat with me every day. There"—handing the girl a slip of paper—"is the address. Be sure and get your grandmother's consent before you write to him."

Laurestine thanked the woman and turned sadly away. She could not make the cashier understand that their friendship with Worthing was different. She was unable to analyze it herself. She was only conscious of a big aching void, she knew not where. Laurestine was even ignorant of the location of her heart. Love was a closed book. She was lonely for her friend—that was all.

"Not until I find my father."

She looked forlornly at the fallen tree as she passed it on her way home. She would like to have sat down to try and think it all out; but too much time had been lost already. Her grandmother would scold if she stayed away too long.

Poor little Laurestine was experiencing her first grief. She walked wearily home, her basket heavier than ever before. Everything seemed changed. The beautiful September sunset looked blurred and misty through her tears. The flare of crimson and gold from the trees became just dead leaves. The little rustic cottage which had always seemed so cheerful and homelike looked ugly and dirty as she approached it. As she walked along the side of the house, she could hear her grandmother speaking to some one at the front door, and the old woman's voice had never before sounded so rude and harsh.

Mrs. Wilkes in an unguarded moment had told Laurestine that she was not her lawful grandmother; but torture would not have extracted from her the secret of the child's birth. Yet she dreaded the time when the girl would be old enough to insist upon knowing her parentage. The old woman was not restrained so much by loyalty as superstition. She had adopted Laurestine when she was a baby. When the little girl was five years old, a great aunt—the only living relative the child had—had on her deathbed bound Mrs. Wilkes by an oath never to reveal Laurestine's origin. Mrs. Wilkes was already under great obligations to the dying woman. So when a sum of money was settled on her, the oath was taken, and the old aunt died in peace. So far Mrs. Wilkes had kept her promise. She was still drawing interest on the money received for Laurestine, but the child had for years more than earned her living making and selling the dainty basketware.

Mrs. Wilkes was not an unkind woman, but she was selfish and grasping. The younger woman whom Laurestine considered her aunt and remembered so kindly was a daughter of Mrs. Wilkes, who had married and gone to live in a distant State. When Mrs. Wilkes first moved to Pawling she shunned her neighbors sedulously, fearing that they would question her about her charge. The villagers, who were like one large family, noticed something unusual in the newcomers, and assiduously avoided them. When the danger of discovery was over, Mrs. Wilkes chafed under the ostracism, but it was too late. Pawling had decided. And so little Laurestine grew up without playmates; and during the hours which other children spent in play and exchanging notes, Laurestine learned to make baskets of sweet grass and birch-bark picture frames.

There was good reason for Mrs. Wilkes' voice sounding harsher than usual. As Laurestine turned the corner of the house she saw her grandmother sarcastically bowing out a visitor from the front door.

"I should think that a fine lady like yourself would have enough with your mask balls and your golf and tennis without worrying your head about an honest gal who is earning her living making and selling a few baskets," she was saying, in curt tones. "We never bother our heads about your flirtations, and we don't thank you for interfering with ours."

The visitor gave a little amused laugh. "Oh, very well," she said carelessly; "you may change your independent tone before long."

Laurestine stood in open-mouthed astonishment. The visitor was none other than Mrs. Vane.

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Wilkes watched the departing visitor pick her way daintily down the road, then she turned to Laurestine. The Wilkes cottage stood fully a half-mile from any habitation, and there was no danger of being overheard.

"Do you know why that woman came here to see me?" she demanded.

Laurestine seemed to have grown several years older since the morning. "I suppose about Gerald," she said, in frightened tones.

"Gerald!" snapped her grandmother. "If you mean Mr. Worthing you just say so, and no Gerald about it. The idea. Why haven't you told me about this Mr. Worthing?"

"I told you, granny. It was the gentleman who bought all the things for the cashier at the hotel, the day you said I was a good girl."

The old woman's eyes narrowed, and for a moment she looked doubtfully at the alarmed child. "I thought he bought the things because he wanted to give them to the cashier. But it seems it was an excuse to spend the money with you," she cried, looking at the girl searchingly.

"I think it was both," stammered Laurestine, "because she is his friend, too."

Laurestine had never seen her grandmother so angry and excited before. "Now, Laurestine, you tell me all about this friendship from the first to the last."

While Mrs. Wilkes thoroughly believed in the bad blood supposed to run in Laurestine's veins, she remembered that not one of her family—and Mrs. Wilkes had known several of them—had ever been known to tell a lie. So when the girl told her of the past between herself and Gerald Worthing the old woman marveled at the child's simplicity. The old woman learned that in proof of the existing friendship they were to call each other by their first names. They met nearly every day at the fallen tree for a few words of mutual confidence. While marveling at the girl's confessions so innocently told, Mrs. Wilkes never doubted their verity. Indeed, she believed implicitly, for Laurestine had never tried to deceive her.

Mrs. Wilkes had never felt any affection for Laurestine. She unreasonably held her responsible for their exclusion from the few relatives and neighbors they had, instead of becoming reconciled to the fact that while she felt it necessary to hide herself, as it were, Laurestine's money and what she was able to earn had made it possible for the Wilkes to live in comparative ease.

She felt more angry than ever with the poor child because Mrs. Vane insinuated that she would like to know more of the girl's antecedents. She had not intended to tell her charge for several years, but now she decided to tell her enough to make her ashamed of her mother. Mrs. Wilkes intended that the girl would not be led to reveal what she knew or be tempted to try to find out more. In this way the woman showed the coarse fiber in her nature, and demonstrated her utter lack of true womanliness. She decided to tell Laurestine her history that very night. The girl was told to go in make a light and prepare supper.

Meanwhile Mrs. Wilkes paced up and down outside. She pulled a letter from the front of her dress and reread it. It was from her only daughter living in Colorado. This daughter had always been fond of the little Laurestine, and had written a few days before asking her mother to send the child to her for the winter. The old people could spare her better after the basket-selling season was over.

Mrs. Wilkes and her daughter had never agreed on the subject of Laurestine's training. Her daughter thought the girl should have education according to her birth; but the older woman maintained that education and leaving home had brought sorrow to the child's mother, and to guard against the bad blood, supposed to be in her, the child was expected to stay under the close surveillance of her foster parents. She was sustained in this resolution by her husband, a shiftless, half-invalid of uncertain temper, who spent half his life smoking a pipe under a mosquito netting, and the other half whittling sticks before a log fire in the chimney corner.

Mrs. Wilkes knew that her daughter had never shared her belief in the utter depravity of Laurestine's mother, and she was wondering now whether it would be wise to send the girl there just at this time. But when she recalled the insatiable curiosity of Mrs. Vane, she felt there was no secret that woman could not ferret out.

Meanwhile Laurestine, with a vague feeling that her grandmother had not wholly relieved her mind, and wondering how she would dare ask permission to write to Gerald Worthing, entered the living-room of the cottage and began to prepare the evening meal. There were no signs of poverty. On the contrary, the fresh print butter and the loaf of new bread just left by the baker, the large meat pie and dish of stewed pears, showed a keen appreciation and ample means to furnish good fare. Laurestine was too preoccupied with sad thoughts to notice her only playmate, an old setter dog with one eye and a lame foot. He stretched out and wagged his tail confidently as the savory smell of fried potatoes reached his nostrils.

When the tea was made she called her grandmother and roused her grandfather from a nap—the third since dinner time. He growled and said it was a shame a sick man had to be disturbed to eat victuals he didn't care anything about. Mrs. Wilkes ate her supper in silence, and Laurestine felt as if she would choke if she tried to eat at all. She surreptitiously fed a big black cat that purred persuasively at her elbow.

After the meal Laurestine cleared the table and fed the old setter dog and the black cat with the remains of the pie and fried potatoes. She had trained them to eat in harmony from the same dish. Then she washed up the supper things and put them away. She looked nervously at her grandmother. But Mrs. Wilkes was looking at a newspaper and appeared not to see her. The child picked up a brass candlestick and mounted the rickety stairs to her room. It was bare, with a strip of rag carpet, a few old prints, and a small square stand that

served for every purpose. A patchwork quilt, very much faded, covered the bed. Altogether it seemed forlorn enough.

Strange she had never thought before how ugly and shabby everything seemed. As she sat on the edge of her little bed, vividly the past few years passed before her. She recalled her grandparents' varying moods, their fits of temper, their constant urging her to accomplish more work, their rudeness to any one who manifested the slightest interest in her. More clearly than all else came back the look on her grandmother's face when she turned from Mrs. Vane and asked about her friendship with Gerald Worthing.

She thought of her new friend. Separation from him was teaching her how happy she had been in his company. She walked to the little window and looked out listlessly. A few stars were out, but it was a dark night. The girl shivered and pulled down the shade. She was not cold, but a nameless fear possessed her. Since learning of Gerald Worthing's departure Laurestine had experienced many changes of feeling, but with every new sense of fear or affection the form of Gerald rose to assure her, and seemed to stand between her and her childhood.

Laurestine knew nothing of her past or her prospects—and cared less. Her grandmother had not hesitated to tell her that she was wholly beholden to her for everything. Laurestine had believed it, and felt as deep a gratitude as a child is capable of. She went back to the little bed, and sat dangling her legs, the childish, flowerlike face clouded with the first awakening of a desire to know who and what her parents were. What was meant by the bad blood in her? Why hadn't she thought of her parents before Gerald Worthing went away. Perhaps he could have explained it. Anyway, he hadn't minded when she told him that she was an orphan. The matured feeling that had gradually grown upon her since her talk with the cashier at the hotel gave her courage, and she resolved to ask her grandmother all she knew about her mother and why she had no father.

"Mother, father! Oh, how lovely it sounds!" whispered the girl under her breath. "Suppose, after all," she thought, "there has been some mistake, and I have a mother. Gerald says that every one must have a father. If I could only find mine."

Her eyes filled with tears of love for the parents she had never known. Poor little Laurestine! How far she was from ever knowing them, only the merciful providence who watches every sparrow that falls knows.

CHAPTER X.

For several days after his return to the city Gerald Worthing could do nothing but sit and stare out of his office window, or bury his head in his hands and groan.

John Penton, his clerk, a trustworthy old man whom Worthing had inherited from his father with the rest of the law business, looked anxiously at his employer. Worthing stayed in his private office, and instructed Penton to prevent callers from seeing him, as he had an attack of neuralgia. Penton did so with ready tact. Worthing had been troubled with this malady since early boyhood, and old Penton knew the symptoms of the complaint. But there were none in the present case, and he suggested a doctor.

"A doctor. What for?"

"To find out what is the matter. It is not like you to act so strange and silent."

"There's nothing the matter with me, Penton. I have only met with a defeat, where I hoped for success."

The old man looked affectionately at his young employer. "Is there anything I can do, sir?" he asked.

"No; not just now. But later I may have to take a trip abroad." Worthing looked at the old man, and a groan burst from his lips.

"Yes, sir," said old Penton, pityingly. "It is very unexpected. I hoped quite different."

"Well, Penton, you have always been such a close friend," said Worthing. "You might as well hear the story first as last." And he poured out his pent-up feelings into the ears of the faithful old man.

"I have given her the love of my life. Everything that would have gone to my mother, brothers and sisters, if I had been so blest; and now I find that she does not care for me so much as I do for her."

"Impossible in any woman, sir," interrupted Penton. "Though I haven't much faith in any of them. I was engaged to one myself once, but she disappointed me. But that was a different thing. I can't understand any woman not wanting you."

Worthing smiled faintly, touched by the old man's evident fidelity. The next day Gerald was in his office early, a strange feeling of emptiness about him. He was the same person, and yet how changed. It was the same busy, dirty world, but he had nothing to do in it. He was dazed by the disappointment that had befallen him. Among the first letters he opened was one from Laurestine. In his trouble he had forgotten that such a person as Laurestine existed.

"Dear little girl," he murmured. "I wonder if her trouble is as great as mine. I wonder if she will ever know the despair that I have endured. I would do anything to spare her a gnawing pain at the heart, such as I am experiencing."

Laurestine's letter contained only a few simple words of regret at not seeing him to say good-by. He sighed when he came to the last line where she said: "I can never be happy in Pawling again, because everything here reminds me of you. If I reminded me that you would come again some day I could wait forever. But everything seems to whisper, 'Nevermore.'"

Gerald mused in silence for a short time; then a sudden idea gripped him. Why should the innocent Laurestine suffer, if a few moments of his valueless time would make her happy? He had never taken the trouble to gauge the depths of her feelings. In his heart he did not think that it was very deep. She was a beautiful flower, perhaps as frail as she was lovely. He wrote Laurestine a sweet, brotherly letter, in which he promised to see her two days later at the fallen tree in the lane.

"I will make one person happy," he muttered. "If I am miserable myself."

He entered the outer office where old Penton was busy. "Here is a letter, John, which I would like to have mailed at once," he said. "And I don't want to see any one today."

"Certainly, sir. I will see that you are not disturbed."

Worthing returned to his private office, and John Penton took down his hat and prepared to mail the letter.

"Miss Laurestine Wilkes," he read. "What a name! Mr. Gerald Worthing to Miss Laurestine Wilkes. Well, I declare," he mumbled, scratching his head, "I'm all at sea. I thought it was Merton Phillips' daughter."

When Penton returned he heard voices in the private office. The old man wondered angrily who had stolen a march on him. He soon recognized his employer's voice and Merton Phillips'. Their conversation was clearly audible, and Penton was soon in possession of the facts of the quarrel.

Mr. Phillips repeated the story that had been told Millicent. He said she was deeply offended, but would consider an explanation. Worthing replied in cold, metallic tones that Millicent had been

Spent half his life smoking before the cottage.

told to choose between him and Mrs. Vane's ball. She had chosen. He denied all the false accusations. Mr. Phillips had anticipated the trouble his daughter's hasty willfulness would one day bring upon her.

"Come and see her, and let her make her own excuses," he said, soothingly.

But Worthing resolutely refused to see her. As Merton Phillips left the outer office, old Penton followed him with his eyes, and his face was a study. He was puzzled and astonished, and he gazed toward the inner office as though he were half doubtful of his senses.

"What does it mean?" he muttered. "I have just mailed a letter to Miss Laurestine. He denied all about it. I would stake the boss's honor against anything. But it looks very certain that he is wooing two women at the same time."

But old John Penton had still another surprise in store for him. He could hear his employer pacing up and down in his office. The old man sat idly musing on the events of the morning, when he was startled by a timid touch on his arm. He almost fell off his stool. But he managed to hold on and stare in blank surprise.

"Is this Mr. Gerald Worthing's office?" asked the sweetest voice old John had ever heard.

"To be sure it is, my dear, and what can I do for you?" the old man asked in turn.

At the kindly tones the little creature came a step nearer. The big blue eyes filled with tears and her lips quivered.

"I would like to see Mr. Worthing," she said, timidly.

"But Mr. Worthing doesn't want to see anybody today; he is not feeling well," answered Penton, looking quizzically at the young girl.

In fact, old Penton thought he saw an incident that would divert Mr. Gerald's thoughts from his troubles, and he intended to let him see this remarkable client.

"Well, my dear, is it church, politics, or the Ship of State you wish to consult Mr. Worthing about?" he asked, whimsically.

"I am not sure whether my business comes under either of the things you mention, but it is very important," replied the new client.

Just then the inner door opened and Gerald appeared. "Laurestine," he exclaimed in delighted tones.

With one bound, like a fawn she reached his side. "Oh, Gerald, Gerald!" she cried hysterically.

The young man looked surprised. He had never seen the demure child show so much feeling before. He took her hands and held her at arms' length, gazing at her admiringly. She was neatly and simply attired. Her shoes were heavier than necessary, he fancied; but otherwise she was faultlessly dressed in a little blue middy sailor suit, with red trimmings. Her lovely braid was looped up and tied with the same colored ribbon.

Worthing glanced around the office as if he expected to see some one else. She saw the look and shook her head. "I am alone," she said. Then she lowered her voice and whispered, "Gerald, I have run away from home."

CHAPTER XI.

When Worthing recovered from the first shock caused by Laurestine's announcement that she had run away from home, his lawyer's prudence instinctively prompted him to caution. He led the girl to his private office and told her to tell him everything, in order that he might help her.

When Laurestine finished her story—which after all, was a very short one—Worthing looked up from a bent position he had taken while the girl was speaking. There was no embarrassment, as he feared there might be; only troubled frankness in the large misty eyes fixed upon his face.

"That is absolutely all you know?" he asked, gravely.

"Everything, Gerald," she replied, mournfully.

Then Laurestine listened attentively to the instructions he gave her, and promised obedience until he came to the last clause, wherein he told her she must return to her guardians. Then she rose and stood before him, her little hands tightly clenched.

"Gerald," she said, resolutely, "I'll never go back until I have found my father."

There was earnestness and courage in her manner that Worthing had never dreamed of. He looked apprehensively at the determined little figure.

"Usually my clients have to follow my advice, or I drop the case," he said quietly, touching an electric button. "But I will make an exception in this instance and consult my head clerk."

"You will not send me back, Gerald," she begged, piteously.

"Not if you do as I tell you. Now, please wait in the other room, and don't run away from me," he said, smiling encouragingly.

Old Penton came in response to the ring. Worthing and his confidential clerk talked earnestly for a few minutes.

"The only thing we have to hope for," said the young lawyer, at last, "is that the old people may be bought; or the woman in Pueblo, Colorado, be made to confess."

"How?" questioned Penton.

"Make her think the old folks have given up the information. But we can talk about that later. The important question just now is: What can I do with the child for the present? I have appointed myself her guardian until I find out whether the Wilkes have any legal claims on her. I have decided to find a school for her, but in the meantime—"

"I have it, sir," interrupted Penton. "If you think well of the idea, I will ring up my sister, and she will take her home today and fix her up for school."

"Thank you, Penton," said Worthing, gratefully. "You always do just what I want before I know that I want it."

The old clerk looked affectionately at his employer. "She's a bonny little girl, Mr. Gerald, and I'm thinking that law would be less dry if we had more clients like her. And she will be grown up before you know it."

"It is to be hoped she will fall into the right hands," he said, eyeing the young man quaintly.

"Ah, that's the crux of the whole thing," replied Gerald, with a sigh. "Millicent Phillips is charming, adorable, and, oh! so good, until our ideas clash. Then she seems to hate me."

"It's the old story, Mr. Gerald. All women are good for some one, but the trick is to find the one that is good for you."

Two days later Laurestine was placed in a private school in the suburbs of New York, and the search for her father began. It promised to be the most baffling case in Worthing's experience. Mrs. Wilkes wrote for information concerning her granddaughter. No attention was paid to her request. Two days later she appeared at Worthing's office, which was exactly what he expected. The young lawyer tried persuasiveness, bribery, and finally threats. The old woman only laughed and tried the same weapons on him to induce him to give up the girl. So the two fenced and parried for an hour or two. Worthing tried every artifice known to him, to confuse the old woman into an omission of vigilance, but to no purpose. She left him vowing to go to law and make him give up Laurestine.

"That is all we want," remarked Penton, as he closed the door on the irate female. "If she fights us she will have to prove her claims to the child. That's all we want," he chuckled.

"But she won't fight, Penton," said Worthing, decidedly. "She knows a trick worth two of that. I wish we could get at Moses. From what Laurestine says he's too lazy to argue long."

But when a stranger was sent to Pawling and hung around the Wilkes' cottage he found the old woman mounted guard over her dilatory husband. The old setter dog was chained at the door, where he blinked his one eye, and as though he resented being used as a watchdog, he growled discontentedly at the approach of every stranger.

The lawyer now turned his attention to Mrs. Stone of Pueblo, Colorado. But she, like her mother, was imperious to the carefully veiled bribery. And later when they threatened her boldly, she defied them. Then Worthing wrote that Laurestine's father had been found and wished to see her. The hopelessness of the quest was apparent when the answer to this last appeal was received.

"Laurestine's father has never been lost," she wrote. "How did you know that you had found him?"

CHAPTER XII.

Three years later, Gerald Worthing, immaculately attired in evening clothes, dismissed his automobile and rang the bell at a brilliantly lighted house in the suburbs of New York.

It was a select academy for young ladies. The principal, who was also the proprietor, insisted upon picking her pupils from the elect. Worthing was ushered into a large receptionroom ablaze with lights and flowers. The neat housemaid took his card and disappeared. He glanced around at the evident signs of festivities. Then the muffled sounds of the caterer and decorator, as they arranged chairs and tables and pulled furniture about, reached his ears.

The sounds of music floated through the rooms, and an occasional ripple of silvery laughter mingled with the swish of a white skirt as it passed the door. Gerald looked radiantly happy as he gazed expectantly at the door. He no longer wore the anxious look which had distressed his old clerk years ago. Presently he heard the dignified rustle of silk, and the principal, a tall, majestic lady dressed in black satin, entered.

"Good evening, Mr. Worthing," she said, graciously extending her hand and motioning him to a seat by her side.

Gerald bowed over the beautiful white hand. "I came early, Mrs. Masterson, because I want a little chat with you before the merriment begins."

She smiled affably. "I thought so. About Laurestine, of course," she replied. "I have always made it a rule, Mr. Worthing, not to allow myself to grow fond of a pupil, because she will leave me at last, and always look upon her old principal as a sort of bogie. I have made an exception in Laurestine's case. I am very fond of the dear child, and I am sorry that through her aptitude she is one of the girls to graduate tonight—a year sooner than I expected."

There was genuine regret in Mrs. Masterson's voice and manner. For a moment Gerald's face clouded. "You may not lose her so soon as you imagine, Mrs. Masterson," he said, gravely. "You know my dearest wish, and if Laurestine regards me only as a brother I shall have to claim your hospitality for her until some one worthier than I wins her. As I told you before, we are both orphans, and have no relatives."

"Your modesty is quite amusing," laughed Mrs. Masterson. "Why, the dear child idolizes you. Her ideal is personified in her Gerald. Indeed, I am afraid you will find it difficult to live up to her conception."

A look of rapture came into Gerald Worthing's eyes. "Your words make me very happy, Mrs. Masterson. Dear little Laurestine; her growth and development under your careful instruction has been such a delightful study. I am almost sorry it is over. But I am afraid that she only looks upon me as her guardian, or father confessor."

Mrs. Masterson smiled reassuringly. "You have no reason to be downcast, Mr. Worthing. Come," she said rising. "I advise you to

"'Put it to the test
To win or lose it all.'"

Gerald followed his hostess to the large room where dancing had begun. He did not hear the sound of Mrs. Masterson's last words, because if he failed to win Laurestine he would not lose all; he would still be her guardian. He was thinking of the time, three years before, when Laurestine would have given her love unasked; when he fully thought he loved Millicent. But this Laurestine was entirely different from the little girl who came to his office and said: "Gerald, I have run away from home."

Her mind had undergone as many

changes as her outward appearance. While she was just as sweet and innocent, she had the point of view of a well-instructed, modern young lady. Gerald quailed as he thought of his twelve years seniority. But if he had been less diffident, he would have known that a young girl, in nearly every case, is more flattered by the attention of an older man than by some one of her own age.

As Laurestine came gracefully forward to meet him she made a picture that it was hard to forget, her soft white dress clinging to her slight figure, her lovely fair hair shining like a crown of glory around the sweet, flowerlike face. Gerald pushed his way through the merry, chattering throng, and pausing at her side, whispered:

"Laurestine, you look like a fairy queen, and I crave a boon, your majesty."

"Granted before requested," was the sweet reply, as she touched him lightly with her fan.

"You will favor me with the next dance, a waltz, I believe?"

She placed her hand in his arm, and they walked over to the tall French window. A keen observer would have recognized the old shy, downcast eyes whenever Gerald addressed her. A moment later they were floating dreamily to the soft music of the "Kiss Waltz."

"I am green with envy," he whispered later, as her partner claimed her for the next dance. She tripped away with a merry laugh, and Gerald's eyes followed her and the handsome youth who looked adoringly at his lovely partner.

"A very pretty couple," said a voice at Worthing's elbow.

Gerald concealed his astonishment at being addressed, for there was scarcely a soul in the room he knew. But he could not suppress the frown the words called forth. He turned to the speaker, and recognized the little German teacher whom he had met upon one of his former calls.

"You know Miss Wilkes' partner?" she asked.

"Mr. Summers, I believe," answered Gerald, carelessly. The little woman looked knowingly.

"Mrs. Masterson's nephew," she added. "He is completely wild over the young girl, and will ask her to marry him. Mrs. Masterson is not adverse to the match."

"We are verging on gossip, Miss Miller," said Gerald, uneasily.

"Anything concerning his ward should not be considered gossip by Mr. Worthing," answered the woman, meaningly.

"That is true," said the other, impressed with her reasoning.

"Perhaps you can tell me what are the views of the young lady on the matter."

"The girl is very fond of some one else. She is sensitive and guileless. It will not be difficult to convince her that the person she loves is not in love with her," said the German teacher, promptly.

"But who would do such a thing?" asked Gerald, sharply.

The woman glanced over at Mrs. Masterson, who was fixing them with her eye. "Hush! We must not gossip, Mr. Worthing," she said, saucily, and she made her way over to the commanding figure of Mrs. Masterson.

Gerald looked thoughtful and anxious. What did the woman mean? he wondered. He then went in search of Laurestine. The music had ceased, and the dancers were seeking cool spots and refreshments. After all, there was nothing strange about a man wanting to marry Laurestine. He thought that every man that saw her must want her. But did she want anybody but him? Ah, he must find out at once.

He found her on the veranda with the handsome young Summers, who was engaged in enveloping Laurestine's head and shoulders in a diaphanous, creamy wrap that floated about her like a gleaming cloud.

"She looks like a spirit," thought Gerald. For the moment he half regretted that she was so lovely. Then he felt as though his life was passing away. Young Summers had taken her hands and kissed them.

Worthing could not see in the moonlight whether this last movement was agreeable to the girl or not. Then he saw that the young man was talking fervently. Gerald turned and re-entered the ballroom. "Better let him get it off his mind," he mutttered, sardonically.

Later Laurestine found her guardian moodily watching the dancers.

"Oh, truant!" he said, almost gayly.

"Take pity on me, Gerald!" she laughed. "No one has offered to dance with me, and the number is half over."

Gerald caught the gleam of her bright eyes before the lashes hid them from sight. "No, no, Laurestine! Come out in the moonlight," he said, tenderly.

All unconsciously she glided by his side. He walked silently down the steps of the veranda on to a small lawn, where seats had been spread out for the use of the dancers; but every one was dancing, and the place was deserted. Gerald felt as shy as a schoolboy with this calm, self-possessed girl. He wondered how he could make her understand him, and whether she understood herself.

She had never got over her old habit of asking questions or answering them in in a way that staggered him. As a rule it was delightful, but tonight he dreaded her.

"Laurestine, do you know what love is?" he asked, abruptly.

"I should; I've had lots of experience," she said, simply.

"Staggerer number one," thought Gerald. "Oh, you have, have you?" he said aloud. "Well, young lady, you will please make a clean breast of it; no half-confidences, either."

Laurestine was looking straight ahead. "That is my secret," she answered, in quiet, even tones.

Gerald tried to appear at ease, but he was far from sure that she had not accepted young Summers.

"Don't you know it is not respectful to have secrets from your guardian?" he asked, with assummed pompousness.

"Do you tell me all your secrets?" she asked, in a mystifying tone.

"All that are worth telling; but I do not have secrets, Laurestine," he said, trying to look into the averted eyes.

"No?"

"That is, I have only one secret——"

"I thought so," she interrupted.

"Would you like to know my secret? Shall I tell it to you?" His voice trembled with passion. She noticed it and thought he was angry.

"I would rather have you tell me than to hear it from a stranger." There was a pathetic sob in her voice.

"No stranger could tell my secret. I am unable to tell it myself."

"Why?" she asked, faintly.

"Because words fail to tell how madly I love you, Laurestine; and how dearly I hope to win you for my wife."

"Gerald!" she exclaimed. With a glad cry she fell into his outstretched arms.

"Oh, Laurestine, is it possible that you love me? Oh, sweetheart, I am so happy." He held her entwined in his arms, and covered her with kisses.

"Gerald, Gerald!" was all that Laurestine could say. But it was enough for him to feel her lovely young arms wound tightly around his neck.

"When did you begin to love, sweetheart?" he asked, when the first overpowering delirium had passed.

"That day at the fallen tree when you promised to be my friend," she replied, with her old shyness. Her eyes were downcast again. "I have been so ashamed, because I thought you didn't want me."

"Oh, my darling," he said, rapturously. He would have folded her in his arms again, but fortunately for Laurestine's white dress some one appeared in the garden.

"And you will be my dear little wife soon?" he asked, in thrilling tones, as they returned to the ballroom.

"Oh, Gerald," she answered, firmly but tenderly, "not until I find my father."

The conclusion of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

Joke of Three Nations.

There are only a few original jokes in the world; some say there are but three, while more liberal authorities allow seven. But every story has its variants, due to the part of the world in which it is told, or the whimsicality of the narrator.

The Duc de Roquelaure, passing in haste through Lyons, was hailed by the bishop of that place with a loud: "Hi! Hi!" The duke stopped.

"Where have you come from?" asked the prelate.

"From Paris."

"What is there fresh in Paris?"

"Green peas."

"But what were the people saying when you left?"

"Vespers."

"Goodness, man! Who are you? What's your name?"

"Ignorant people call me Hi! Hi! Gentlemen call me the Duc de Roquelaure. Drive on, postilion!"

This is how the story appears in French. Horace Smith in his "Tin Trumpet," gives an English form. The hero this time is "a well-known civic wag." In traveling post, he was obliged to stop at a village to replace a shoe which his horse had lost, when the Paul Pry of the place bustled up to the carriage window, and without waiting for the ceremony of an introduction said:

"Good morning, sir! Horse cast a shoe, I see. I suppose, sir, you are going to——"

Here he paused, expecting the name of the place to be supplied, but the gentleman answered:

"You are quite right. I generally go there at this season."

"Ay, ay, eem!—do you? And no doubt you are now come from——"

"Right again, sir. I live there."

"Oh, aye; I see. You do! But I perceive it is a London shay. Is there anything stirring in London?"

"Oh, yes; plenty of other chaises and carriages of all sorts."

"Ees, aye, of course! But what do folks say?"

"They say their prayers every Sunday."

"That isn't what I mean. I want to know whether there is anything new and fresh."

"Yes; bread and herrings."

"Ah, you are a queer fellow! Pray, mister, may I ask your name?"

"Fools and clowns," said the gentleman, "call me mister; but I am in reality one of the clowns of Aristophanes, and my real name is Brekekekex Koax! Drive on, postilion!"

Thus it is that in the later nineteenth century this story appeared transmogrified and Americanized as follows, in a Western paper:

"Hello, stranger! You appear to be traveling."

"Yes, I always travel when I'm on a journey."

"I think I have seen you somewhere?"

"Very likely. I've often been there."

"Mightn't your name be Smith?"

"Well, it might—if it wasn't something else."

"Have you been long in these parts?"

"Never longer that at present—five feet nine."

"Do you calculate to remain here some time?"

"Well, I guess I'll stay till I'm ready to leave."

Mere Suggestion.

"Gertrude!"

"Yes, John."

"We've been married long enough now to talk plainly to each other."

"What's the matter now?"

"If I do something you don't like I want you to tell me about it, and if you do things I don't like I think I ought to tell you about them, too."

"I suppose I don't suit you at all?"

"Yes, you do, but I think we ought to talk over our likes and dislikes. In that way we can get along so much better."

"John, I want you to understand right now that I was brought up every bit as well as you, and know how to behave. And as to my cooking, I can do as well as your mother ever did."

"I had hoped that you wouldn't lose your temper. But if you're going to act this way we may as well drop the matter right here."

"What is the matter, anyhow?"

"I only wanted to suggest that when you darn my socks it would be better for me if you would tie the knots on the outside, instead of the inside."

Governor's Governor.

When the late Senator Taylor, of Tennessee, was Governor of that State, he was interrupted just as he sat down to luncheon at home one day by a message from the capitol to the effect that two men from an outside town wanted to see the Governor at once.

The Governor said to Sam, his negro butler, who brought in the message: "Sam, tell them I'll be right down."

"Yes, sir," said Sam.

"Sam," broke in Mrs. Taylor, "you tell them the Governor will be down in half an hour—after he has finished his luncheon."

"Sam," said the Governor, "say I'll be right down."

"In half an hour, Sam," said Mrs. Taylor.

"Sam," said the Governor, "do you know who is the Governor of Tennessee?"

"Yes, sir," replied Sam. "I'll tell 'em you'll be down in half an hour."

NO MEDICINE

But Change of Food Gave Final Relief.

Most diseases start in the alimentary canal—stomach and bowels.

A great deal of our stomach and bowel troubles come from eating too much starchy and greasy food.

The stomach does not digest any of the starchy food we eat—white bread, pastry, potatoes, oats, etc—these things are digested in the small intestines, and if we eat too much, as most of us do, the organs that should digest this kind of food are overcome by excess of work, so that fermentation, indigestion, and a long train of ails result.

Too much fat also is hard to digest and this is changed into acids, sour stomach, belching gas, and a bloated, heavy feeling.

In these conditions a change from indigestible foods to Grape-Nuts will work wonders in not only relieving the distress but in building up a strong digestion, clear brain and steady nerves. A Wash. woman writes:

"About five years ago I suffered with bad stomach—dyspepsia, indigestion, constipation—caused, I know now, from overeating starchy and greasy food.

"I doctored for two years without any benefit. The doctor told me there was no cure for me. I could not eat anything without suffering severe pain in my back and sides, and I became discouraged.

"A friend recommended Grape-Nuts and I began to use it. In less than two weeks I began to feel better and inside of two months I was a well woman and have been ever since.

"I can eat anything I wish with pleasure. We eat Grape-Nuts and cream for breakfast and are very fond of it." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

How She Fooled the Doctor

Three years ago my little girl, Angela, was taken sick with scarlet fever and later dropsy set in; her face and limbs swelled and her eyes puffed. A leading physician here at the time, treated her without the slightest success. A sample of your Swamp-Root having been left at the house at the time, I resolved to try it, and as it agreed with her stomach I continued using it with grateful results. The inflammation began to subside after she had taken the first fifty-cent bottle, and after she took two large bottles she was pronounced cured by the doctor and has been in good health ever since. The doctor came to see her every day and examined her every second day until he pronounced her kidneys in perfect condition.

Now then the doctor was under the impression that I was giving my girl his medicine, but as his medicine had failed to do a bit of good, and desiring not to offend him, I did not tell him I was giving her Swamp-Root and he did not know the difference. I did not use one drop of his medicine after I started my girl on Swamp-Root, and have always felt that Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root saved my girl's life, for which I am grateful.

I cannot praise it too highly.

Very truly,
MRS. MARY BYRNE,
New Brunswick, N. J.

State of New Jersey } ss.
County of Middlesex }

Mrs. Mary Byrne, being duly sworn by me, according to law, on her oath saith that the above statement made by me is just and true. MRS. MARY BYRNE.

Sworn and subscribed to before me, this 16th day of July, A. D., 1909.

MARGARET P. O'DONNELL,
Notary Public.

Letter to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y.

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AN AEROPLANE ELOPEMENT

Or, THE WINDS OF CHANCE. By STANLEY F. MATTHEWS

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CHAPTER X.

WHAT THE REVENUE MAN SAW.

IN TIMES that were past Karl had delighted to spend his vacations in the woods during the season for deer hunting. Thus he had learned many of the woodsmen's ways, and could vie with the best of guides in creeping up on wary game without giving the slightest indication of his presence. Here was a chance to put his knowledge of woodcraft to some practical use. He only hoped that the Grenfells dog might happen to be away visiting some neighbor's hound; or ranging the woods on a fox trail; for while he might readily keep his presence hidden from human beings, the keen scent of a dog was quite a different matter.

Crawling up, Karl found his way so as to make the bushes screen his form. Now he was able to hear the growl of heavy voices, and even catch a few words from time to time. One of these things he heard was the significant expression "Shoot him like the dawg he air;" and it did not require very much sagacity for the concealed revenue man to apply the words to himself.

So far as he could make out, all of those gathered here, and there were at least half a score in the bunch, seemed to belong to the older class of mountaineers; for he could see gray beards in profusion. But at least age did not seem to dim the hatred they felt toward anything bearing a resemblance to a Government officer, sent to interfere with their private affairs. In that respect they were as hot-headed as the young bloods. But outside of the messenger who had come for old Luke, the watcher was unable to place a single young fellow. This must be accepted as proof that what Polly had suspected might be the actual truth; and that Jack Lawson with his gang must be off on other business.

He soon discovered Polly's father. Strange to say, old Luke appeared the coolest man in the entire collection. Indeed, Karl looked at him in more or less surprise, for he understood that Luke had for many years been the leading spirit in this illegal business, and was looked up to as a leader by the entire mountain community. Reports had stated that whenever a raid was planned by the officers of the Government, it had always fallen through simply because of the generalship of this same Luke Johnson, whose ready brain had served to divine what plans were to be put into operation, and engineered one of his own that met them halfway. But while the rest of the group seemed to be deeply concerned, and were venting their anger in no uncertain tones, Luke appeared calm and unruffled. Indeed, Karl believed that he could even see what looked like a smile creep across the seamed and rugged face of the old moonshiner, as he watched him closely.

"Looks like a big change has come about with Luke, and that he means to pass the mantle of leadership over to some one else," Karl was saying to himself, as he saw the way in which the other shook his head at some savage suggestion on the part of Jud Grenfells, father of Dolph.

Of one thing he felt satisfied—they appeared to be unable to settle on any sort of policy looking to the capture or routing of the revenue man, concerning whose presence in the mountains they had been warned.

"It was a false alarm, and started by Jack himself, in order to get old Luke out of the cabin," Karl decided. "Polly was right, bless her dear little heart. Fears for my safety caused her to guess the true state of affairs. But I'd give something to know what sort of miracle has worked with her dad, to make him seem so mild and tame, when I was given to understand that he was a holy terror whenever the mention of a revenue man was made in his presence. Perhaps a year in the society of his daughter has made old Luke see a great light."

As a fond lover Karl could readily see how such a thing might happen; indeed, it would be harder for him to understand why it need take twelve long months, to convert old Luke to a sense of the error of his ways, when such a fair advocate pleaded the case.

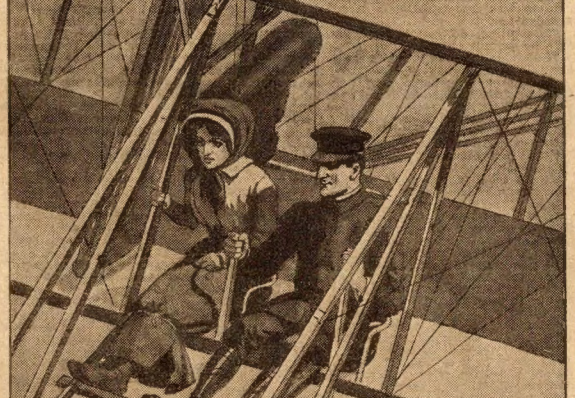
Should he stay around here, and listen to the vague threats of these mountain men; perhaps watch them start out to guard all the trails; so that if indeed a spy had found his way into their midst, he could not get away again?

There was a magnet drawing Karl toward the Johnson cabin. He felt that his interest there was of far greater magnitude than here, where rough men talked of laying traps to catch the bold invader of their haunts. But the actions of old Luke puzzled him. He saw that the other seemed more or less uneasy, as though tempted to quit the meeting. Then once again there flashed through the spy's mind the idea that had come to him before. Would Luke, after quitting his comrades, make his way along some hidden trail to where his famous moonshine still was located, to satisfy himself that it was safe, and had not been located by this agent of the Government?

Bound by his oath Karl felt that he must for the time being sink all his private longings, and only remember what he had come here for. If Luke left the rest and headed up the mountain, he must attempt to follow his heels, no matter what the risk. A light wind had arisen, which rustled the branches of the trees; and this was in his favor; since any slight sound he might happen to make would be confused with the noises of the night.

"There, he's drawing that other aside, the man I believe to be Grenfells, for he looks like Dolph. They seem to be holding an animated talk, and it looks like Luke might be tempting the other to do something, for he's arguing to beat the band. Old Jud is slowly coming around to his way of thinking, too, for his negative shakes grow less violent. By George! there they start this way, right now. Whatever is in the wind, Luke has won him over. See the rest look after them, and talk among themselves as though they didn't just like it. As sure as I live, there's something in the wind, if only I had a clew to the same."

He crouched lower as the two men approached. At the same time his ears were strained, as he hoped to catch some word



Exultation filled the breast of the young aviator.

or phrase that might enlighten him as to what it all meant. Just as they were passing him, he did catch a few sentences.

"Sech a change looks like a kinder big risk tuh take, Luke," Grenfells was saying, as though still putting up a feeble resistance, after having been almost converted to the view his companion took.

"But we're a-gittin' old, Jud, gittin' old, an' fur one I'm tired o' this eternal warfare. It's all right fur younger men, but we ain't got much longer tuh hang out here, you an' me, Jud, an' if so be this idee o' mine turns out harfway decent thar's a livin' in it, Jud, fur all o' us. Kim along o' me, an' see fur yerself how the thing works."

All the while old Luke was drawing the other along, partly by the hold he had on his shirt sleeve, and also through his stronger nature. They passed by the spot where the revenue spy was concealed, and had he wanted Karl could have thrust out a hand, and touched the nearer man; but for all that he lay as still as a mouse until they had gone some little distance along the road. Then, creeping away from the vicinity of the Grenfells cabin, he started to follow after them. Sure enough, after passing almost halfway along the winding road to the cabin of Luke, the pair suddenly turned aside.

"Good!" the tracker whispered to himself, as he noted this action in the light of the moon. "Just as I hoped, Luke has taken Jud to his secret still for some purpose or other. And if I can only keep in touch with them now, I'll have a chance to be the first outsider to ever set eyes on the famous Johnson still, with its worm that has turned out thousands of gallons of moonshine whisky."

He skulked along in the shadows under the trees. How he blessed that night wind because it kept the leaves rustling, and prevented the sharp ears of the moonshiners from hearing any incautious slip he might make from time to time.

One thing seemed strange to Karl. He had anticipated that they would head up the mountain immediately. From what he had heard some of the secret service men say in connection with the matter, this still of Luke Johnson's—which had gone down in the annals of the department as the only one which their agents had never as yet been able to locate, so as to destroy the same—was supposed to be hidden in some lonely defile of the most inaccessible part of the mountains, where possibly there was only one narrow trail past some precipice, and which was constantly guarded night and day. But just now they seemed to be keeping close to the road, a fact that caused the tracker to express his surprise and wonder in various low remarks intended for his own ears alone.

What was that looming up ahead? It seemed to be a new shanty of some sort, for there were many chips on the ground, as though axes had of late been plied by sturdy arms accustomed to their swinging. Not a light was to be seen. The moon's rays fell upon the front of the cabin; and the undergrowth in the immediate vicinity had been cleared away, as though secrecy might be really the last thing thought of in connection with the location of the new shack.

"H'm! I begin to smell a rat," Karl chuckled to himself, as his mind went back to several suspicious circumstances in connection with the attitude of old Luke.

He saw that the two mountaineers had come to a stop in front of the new building, and Luke seemed to be pointing out something that he wished his companion to note particularly.

"Now he's drawing out a key of some sort," Karl concluded; and as few doors in this region ever knew such a thing as a lock, he was the more deeply interested in the promised developments.

From the way in which old Luke threw the heavy door back, after unfastening the same, it was at least evident that he did not keep anything locked up here that would be in danger of escaping.

"Not much," muttered the watcher; "on the contrary that locked door is meant to keep any one from breaking in, not out, and there they enter, old Luke leading the way, as if it was up to him to do the honors. Guess I can't afford to be left out of this affair entirely. I've come a long way to get a glimpse of that famous worm of Luke the Moonshiner; but just now I'm beginning to suspect that the said worm has turned."

He glided forward. Another minute and he was crouching there at the door, and peeping within the new cabin. Luke must have had a lantern hanging in a handy spot, for he had struck a match,

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and lighted one. As Karl took his first peep, the rugged old moonshiner was standing there, pointing to something.

Karl had seen plenty of small mountain stills during the time he had been in the service of the Government as a revenue man. Some of these had been of the most primitive manufacture, though the product did not seem to suffer in consequence; others he remembered had been quite substantial, and reflected more or less credit on their makers, though they had met a sudden fate in the raid of the officers, being battered out of all shape, and utterly destroyed past redemption.

So he instantly recognized the familiar still as seen in the mountains. In this instance it was of much more pretentious proportions than any others that had fallen under his observation. Besides, he noted that there were several barrels near by, and a pile of new cases that looked as though they might contain bottles. Seeing which Karl chuckled softly again, realizing that after all his suspicions had been along the right direction.

"Say, yuh got her all rigged up ready tuh begin work, ain't yuh, Luke?" Jud was saying, as the unseen interloper reached the open door.

"Calkerlate to begin in a day or two now," replied the other, with satisfaction plainly visible in his voice. "An' if so be ye are wise, Jud, ye'll jump at the offer I'm a-makin'. Got a contrack with a big wholesale drug house up in Philadelphy to handle all I kin git out in the next six months. An' twar Polly as put the idee in my head, jest as ye says, Jud. This ole still has cooked corn, an' manufactured moonshine stuff for the last time. As she pans out as well with the new stuff, we's a-gwine to git the everlastin' larf on them revenue fellers. Let 'em kim an' take a look at the new factory. Nawthin' wrong here, be they? Every bottle it'll hev a stamp on, if so be the Government sez it must. Tomorry I'm gwine to meet the man from the big house up Nawth, and then the fire she starts under the still."

The secret was out! Old Luke, the most notorious moonshiner of the Big Smokies, had reformed, thanks to the influence of his daughter, Polly. He had distilled his last drop of illegal "mountain dew," and henceforth his famous still was going to work in legitimate channels, turning out the wonderful cordial and tonic, to the efficacy of which Karl himself could testify!

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEFIANCE OF POLLY.

Karl waited to hear no more. He found himself not a little excited over the astonishing change of sentiment that had overtaken old Luke Johnson, the most notorious of lawless moonshiners in all that region. And the sweet influence of Polly had been responsible for the change of heart. As water will in time wear away the hardest stone, so her sweet pleadings must have shown the old man how small and narrow was the life he led. Perhaps he realized that it was wrong for one respect to keep Polly in such primitive environments the rest of her life, when she was fitted by education to take her place in the civilized world. And it might be, he had learned how impossible it would be for one of her nature to mate with an uncouth mountaineer like Jack Lawson.

"That settles one part of the business," the revenue spy was saying, as he moved carefully away from the new cabin that was to be used as a manufactory for the tonic and cordial. "I can go back to headquarters with a story that will be a seven days' sensation. And perhaps there may be some way to induce Polly to accompany me; for I would never dare come here again, and I'm afraid that Lawson fellow means to rush things from this time on. Luke will lose his grip on these rough mountain men, and a younger and more dare-devil fellow will take his place. Yes, it's back to where I left her for me right now."

He had little trouble in finding the crooked mountain road. Indeed, wagons had come to the cabin, for he discovered marks of wheels; and remembering what he had seen on the preceding night, he had no doubt but that at the time Luke was carrying his still and supplies to the new location.

Again he used due caution. Things had thus far worked in his favor, but that was no reason for any sloppy business now. If Jack and his wild followers had already sought for him in vain at the Johnson cabin, it was likely that they would be scattering through the woods in search of the fugitive aviator. And at any moment he was likely to run upon some of them. Chance had had much to do with his success thus far; but it was a two-edged weapon, which could turn against as well as for him, if he were careless.

As the distance was comparatively short, he soon found himself drawing near his intended destination. Luckily for him the dogs of the vicinity seemed to be having a hunt of some kind on their own hook, either after coons, or possibly a fox that was maneuvering in order to capture certain fowls that roosted in trees near one of the cabins. He could hear their excited baying in numerous keys; and even this fact seemed to convince him that everything must be working toward his interests. Had any of those dogs been doing their proper duty at home, he might have had trouble; for once they started to barking at him, an alarm was apt to follow that would make things rather warm.

Just as he came in sight of the Johnson cabin he discovered that something was moving close by. On looking more closely, Karl learned that this was a party of men or boys, and that they were aiming straight for the door of the building.

"Something has delayed them, and they're just arriving now," he concluded. Then he discovered that several seemed to be carrying burdens of some sort. "Feathers, I wow; and the down of feathers, I reckon, that they expect to donate for my benefit; and that kettle must contain tar,—which is to be nicely heated over a fire somewhere in the woods. Thanks; but all the same I don't think I'm hankering after such brotherly attentions just now. How many are there in the lot—half a dozen, no, seven all told. There, that was a rap on the door! Polly has shut the wooden blind, I notice; but she has her candle burning. Will she open up to their demand?"

He had no sooner asked himself this question before he had the answer. The door of the cabin opened, and light from within fell upon the motley array of disguises which the would-be decorating party had assumed for the occasion.

Although he strained his ears to the utmost, Karl was unable to catch more than a few words of what passed between the brave girl and her grotesque callers. But he could easily guess how she immediately declared that the party they sought was no longer under her father's roof, but had hastily fled some time before. He even saw her point down the side of the mountain, and knew that just as she had announced as her intention, she was directing them on a false scent. Several of the rough callers seemed to question the truth of what she was saying; at least, such would appear to be the case, since two of them pushed past her, and entered the cabin, evidently for the purpose of searching it throughout, even the loft not escaping their mad scrutiny.

Of course, the fact that their intended prey had managed to take warning in time, and escape the net they had spread for his feet, further enraged Jack Lawson and his followers. They could be seen gathering together, and excitedly discussing this new phase of the problem, as though trying to decide on their course. They were not the kind to give up easily. Even though the aviator might have had a little start of them, a greenhorn unaccustomed to mountain trails could not hope to elude them long, once they struck his trail.

He had before this picked out the one whom he believed to be the leader of the party, and hence Jack Lawson. It was easy to do this, because of the importance the others seemed to attach to his actions.

"Even now Jack doesn't know whether he is being hoodwinked or not," the revenue spy whispered to himself, as he noted how the other conferred with his backers, and then looked toward the girl, still standing there in the open door. "But I hope he won't be mad enough to lay a hand on Polly. That would be something I could never stand, no matter what followed."

He lay there in the lush grass, waiting and quivering with suspense. Still holding that little piece of up-to-date mechanism in his grip, he was ready to make immediate use of the same should necessity drive him to extremes. While he might hesitate to take a human life, or even to wound, with his own security in the balance; to see his sweetheart struggling with some of these angry and disappointed young moonshiners would be like setting a match to gunpowder.

But fortunately none of them laid a hand on the girl, which might have been a lucky thing all around. The rest of them feared Jack; and as for young Lawson, he had not as yet become quite worked up to that point of desperation where he would dare brave the anger of old Luke, so long the most feared man in all those Smoky Mountains. They went away, snarling like a pack of baffled curs, and calling back what they meant to do with the stranger, if only they could catch him.

"We'll fotch him back hyar, d'ye see, an' guy him his warm coat! Arter that, if so yuh want tuh keep the sneak under yer roof, yer welcome tuh!" shouted one of the crowd; nor did Jack fall upon him then and there, to punish him for speaking such insulting words, since they merely echoed what he was feeling in his own heart.

Though the excited voices died out as the crowd started to work down the side of the mountain, in the direction Polly had given them to understand the fugitive had fled, that could hardly be taken for proof that they would not return again. The keen eyes of the revenue man had noted the suspicious actions of Jack; and he guessed that should they presently fail to discover any signs of him below, there would be a hasty chase back to the Johnson cabin. That meant he must act promptly if he hoped to gain any advantage because of the temporary absence of his enemies.

As he turned his face once more toward the cabin, however, he made a discovery that chained him motionless to the spot for the time being. Polly had not, as he thought, retreated within the building as soon as the group of noisy young mountaineers faded away. On the contrary, she now darted outside; and wondering what she could be about to do, Karl held back.

His first expectation was along the line of flight; that the girl had become more or less terrorized by the rude actions of the disguised band, and thought to seek shelter in some neighboring cabin, where she would have company in the women and children. Believing thus, Karl was almost on the point of calling her name softly, being desirous of joining her, when suddenly he saw that she had come to a pause. He discovered that she was bending over, as though busying herself with some object. Why, to be sure, it must be the stuff carried here by the followers of young Jack Lawson. Even as he looked he saw her fling the feathers from one of the sacks until the very air seemed to be thick with them. The second bag shared the same fate; after which Polly put her strength to the kettle, and upset the liquid tarry compound upon the earth.

No sooner had she accomplished all these things than the brave girl fled to the interior of the cabin again. Karl was so convulsed with silent laughter that he could not even call out her name in order to stop her. She was doing all this for him, determined that, even though they might manage to find the object of their fury, they would be compelled to secure a new supply of material before they could carry out their miserable threats.

Having managed to recover himself to some extent, Karl now hastened forward. As he reached the door of the cabin he tried it, only to find it fast. Polly, really alarmed by now with regard to the possible result of her latest action, had considered it good policy to drop the bar into place; and thus have a barrier between herself and those violent young mountaineers, should they choose to return.

There being no result following his effort to open the door, Karl knocked, at first gently; and then as there came no response, a little louder. He fancied he had heard some sound back in the woods, as though the rowdies might be returning, and this caused him to expedite matters somewhat.

After the second summons he caught a rustling sound beyond the barred door. Polly was doubtless creeping across to listen. Perhaps she even had a faint hope that instead of this being those she feared, it might turn out to be the one she loved.

"Polly!"

There came a low cry from the other side of the door, proving that her waiting ears must have caught the sound of his voice calling her name.

"Oh! who is it?" she asked, entreatingly; and he could hear the bar move just slightly, as though her eager hands were laid upon it to be ready.

"Karl! Open up!"

Never was the magical "open sesame" of the Arabian Nights productive of speedier returns than the bare mention of that name, which found a responsive chord in the heart of the moonshiner's daughter. Another second, and the door gaped. Karl hardly waited for the opening to grow large enough, ere he pushed his way through. Then again the door went shut, and the bar fell in its place.

No sooner had Polly accomplished this masterly move in the line of defense than she was clasped in a pair of eager arms, and kissed again and again, despite her feeble resistance.

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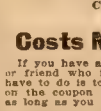

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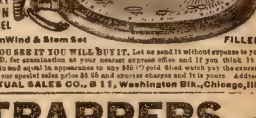

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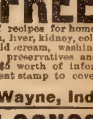

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"Oh! why did you come back again?" she exclaimed, as soon as she could speak.

"Because I could not leave here without you. I have been watching, and I know how that young scoundrel came here, also what was said. He has made up his mind to assume any risk in his mad passion to obtain you. Your father would be immediately embroiled once more in a deadly feud; and as he is old, he must soon fall a victim to the rifle of some cowardly bushwhacker, hidden in the timber. There is only one way you can avoid all this bloodshed and turmoil; that is by consenting to elope with me right now, and marrying me. Then your father can join us later. I happen to know that he has a big surprise in store for you—that he has given up his illegal business of making moonshine whisky, and is about to start into manufacturing the wonderful tonic on a large scale. Old Jud Grenfells is going in with him. He will be no longer hunted like a wild beast, but can go where he wills, for he has never been caught in the act, and there is no positive proof against Luke."

The girl uttered a little choking cry.

"Oh! Karl, this is splendid news you are bringing me! I know you would never deceive me for the sake of gaining my consent to flee!" she exclaimed in a transport of delight.

"Then tell me that you consent, darling. The time is short, and if we are not away from here quickly that crowd may return!" he exclaimed.

Polly uttered a low plaintive cry.

"Listen! I heard voices, dear Karl!" she whispered. "Yes, it is already too late; for that is Jack Lawson speaking outside. He must have seen you enter here. Oh! what can we do?"

CHAPTER XII.

A MOUNTAINEER'S WOOING.

Karl knew that it was even so; for he too had heard the sound of a harsh laugh, and caught words in the well remembered voice belonging to Polly's mountaineer suitor.

"Surround theh cabin, boys, an' don't let theh flyin'-bug critter git way on yuh lives. We got 'im whar we wants 'im; an' even ef Ole Man Johnson kims back, he ain't gwine tuh keep us from a-havin' our fun. Hello! in thar! Be yur gwine tuh kim out, an' take yuh lacin' like a man; er does we hev tuh smash the doah in tuh git yuh?"

"Oh! what shall we do, Karl, dear Karl? They will nearly kill you before they let you go, I fear. If I had only dreamed that it would come to this, yes, I must have consented to what you proposed," Karl heard those dear lips say, so close to his ear that had his head not been bent low he might never have caught the precious words.

His heart pulsated with both delight and alarm; it was fine to know that Pauline was now tempted to fly with him; and at the same time he dreaded what seemed sure to happen, once those ugly moonshiners beat in the door—dreaded it far more on her account than his own, let it be understood.

Suppose he were tarred and feathered and driven out of the hills, not because they knew his real character as a revenue man, but simply on account of the promptings of the green-eyed monster, jealousy, which had taken possession of Jack Lawson's soul—once the other had defied the anger of old Luke Johnson, it was likely that he would deem it wise to go the limit while about it.

That meant the abduction of Polly, and her enforced marriage to the fellow she in her soul loathed. No wonder, then, that Karl gritted his teeth, and vowed that if given half a chance he would at least put it out of Jack's power ever to annoy Polly more; since a dead man can hardly be looked upon as a marriageable quantity.

He fingered that little tool which he had taken from his pocket, and mentally figured just how he would stand there alongside the door when the ruffians were carrying out their project of smashing the same in, and as the first to enter was likely to be the leader of the band, he could surely dispose of Jack before the rest downed him. Of course, the chances were they would murder the stranger on the spot, enraged as they must be by the fate of young Lawson; well, at least it was some satisfaction to feel that in yielding up his life he had saved Polly.

He had perhaps almost unconsciously thrown an arm about the waist of the girl, and the magic of the contact with her dearly loved person filled him with a more deeply rooted determination than ever that this hated Lawson should never he allowed the privilege of domineering over her as his wife.

He knew what brutes many of these uncouth mountaineers were, and with what harshness they treated those dependent on them; Jack had the same uncontrolled passions as the rest of his kind; and Heaven help the woman who was fated to occupy the position of his wife, in time to come.

There came a sharp blow on the door, and then again the harsh voice.

"Open up heah, do yuh heah me? Want us tuh break the doah in. We're gwine tuh git that Yankee, all right, an' they's no use a-tryin' tuh hide 'im ag'in, Polly. Does yuh heah me; open the doah!"

Karl felt the girl stir in his arms.

"Don't think of doing it, darling," he hastened to whisper. "I'll make sure of getting him when they rush in, and you'll be saved from his persecutions, at any rate!"

"Oh! it wasn't that, Karl, it wasn't that!" she replied, her voice trembling now with eagerness, and a newly born hope, rather than fear.

"What is it, then? You have thought of something, I know, I feel! Tell me quickly, dearest, for seconds must count just now!" he hastened to say.

"Yes, yes, the tunnel!" she went on, still quivering with the sensation of experiencing fresh inspiration, when hope had seemed so nearly dead.

"Tunnel!" he echoed, though in a whisper, for fear lest those beyond the stout door learn the subject of their brief conversation. "What's that? Do you mean to tell me your father had the smartness to bore such a hole under his cabin?"

"Yes, that is what he did, years ago. One day he showed it to me, but at the same time warned me never to tell. It was meant for his escape in case the revenues ever surrounded the place and sought to capture him. Oh! perhaps it may now serve a better purpose in effecting your escape, dear Karl!"

No doubt there must have flashed through the mind of the other just then something of the incongruity of things; since this same tunnel had been made in order to defy the officers of the Government; and here it was about to prove of the utmost value to one of those same revenue men.

"But you forget something, Polly," he said, quickly.

"What can that be?" she asked, apprehensively.

"I absolutely refuse to use this same tunnel unless you accompany me," he said, firmly.

"But they will surely kill you if you injure their leader! Please make your escape while there is a chance, Karl! Oh! it would sadden my whole life if anything came to you now!"

"Then do as I say, and accompany me. It will be too late in another minute, for I heard Jack tell one of his men to go to the woodshed to look for the ax. They mean business, and expect to cut their way through this door. Will you come with me, Polly? There is no other way whereby both can be saved; and I will not leave you to the savage who wants you."

He felt her shudder in his arms; but doubtless she realized that as he said, seconds were of the utmost value to them both. So her resolution was quickly taken. Love had pleaded successfully the cause he advocated. To secure him, even more than to escape the dreadful fate in store for herself, she would yield.

"Yes, oh! yes, I will go with you! It would be a crime to refuse. Come, let me show you how to lift the heavy trap in the floor. Here is a knife that you can make use of. If only we are not too late already!"

He kept hold of her dress, for the cabin was in darkness, the candle having been hastily extinguished at the time Karl first knocked on the door. So she led him into one of the smaller rooms leading off from the main one, and used for sleeping purposes.

Now she was down on her knees, fumbling anxiously along the floor.

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"There is a knot in the wood just where the blade of the knife must be inserted in the crack," he heard her breathe, and then she instantly uttered a little cry, as she continued to say: "Yes, here it is, Karl. Take this knife then, and see if you can raise the trap. I will be ready to take hold the instant it moves! Oh!"

Her last exclamation was caused by a loud crash that seemed to make the whole cabin quiver. He knew this indicated that the first blow had been struck on the door, with the ax taken from the woodshed. And as Jack Lawson's ordinarily muscular arms would be nerved by the burning eagerness he felt to lay hands on the guest of Luke Johnson, it might be taken for granted that he would speedily reduce that heavy door to a condition where entrance must be easily accomplished.

Karl was pushing downward with the knife. He had guided the point into the crack, just as the girl indicated, and with his very first movement he believed he could feel something give. At least this seemed encouraging, and his next trial was more vigorous, because back of it lay hope and expectation. It proved successful, too, for the section of heavy puncheon planks began to rise.

No sooner could Polly insert her delicate fingers under the trap, than she clung desperately to the same; but the man was quick to come to her assistance so that between them they raised it on high.

"There is only a drop of a few feet, Karl!" she whispered.

"Then let me go down first, and I can help you," was his reply.

He had laid the trap back on the floor, and even as he was speaking allowed himself to surge over the edge. Yes, when his feet touched the solid ground below, his head was still above the level of the floor.

"Come, and fear nothing, darling!" he said; and she cast herself into his arms, confident as a child jumping at its father's demand.

"Do they know of the trap?" he asked, as he placed her down beside him.

"I am not sure; it may be so; though my father gave me to understand that he had kept it secret, for fear that the revenues might learn about it through a traitor," came the reply.

"Still, it is worth trying, and may give us more time to get away," was his reflection, as he once more clambered out of the hole, to lift the heavy section of flooring, and draw it after him.

Pauline knew what he must be doing, and like the little woman that she was, felt it incumbent upon her to assist him; so she held up her hands, and endeavored to take the entire weight of the trap upon them while he was slipping past again.

"Fine!" he exclaimed, as the trap dropped into place once more, leaving them underneath the floor. "Now, come, we must be getting along as fast as we may. I hope the exit is near by, for that ax will smash through in a hurry," as another heavy crash announced a continuance of the battering policy inaugurated by Jack Lawson.

"I believe it is not far, from what father said," she remarked, close to his ear.

"Say no more, because we might be heard," was his warning.

He had no idea as to their course, while they continued to crawl along in the darkness. For aught they might even then be passing directly beneath the group of disguised moonshiners who were battering their way into the Johnson cabin.

Each time that deftly wielded ax smote the planking of Old Luke's door, the sound of the collision was not unlike muffled thunder, when it reached the ears of the pair crawling under the surface of the ground. It never failed to create a panic in the breast of the girl; for in imagination she could see that savage band bursting into her late home, and quickly discovering that those they sought had mysteriously vanished. Then, if by chance any one in the group knew of Old Luke's hide-out, they would make all haste to get to the exit, so as to be ready to greet the fugitives as they emerged.

"Hurry! oh! hurry, dear Karl!" she whispered more than once, her fears outweighing her sense of discretion, as she mentally pictured this sad ending of her newly awakened hopes.

But they were really going just as fast as the conditions allowed. Karl, as he crawled along, was figuring on what his course should be, once he gained the open air. He would be utterly ignorant as to his surroundings, as well as the direction they must take in order to reach the waiting aeroplane. But surely Polly would know. She had lived here a whole year now, and every foot of the surrounding country must be familiar to her; since she loved to wander in the open, hunting wild flowers, and watching the bees in their hunt for honey and pollen.

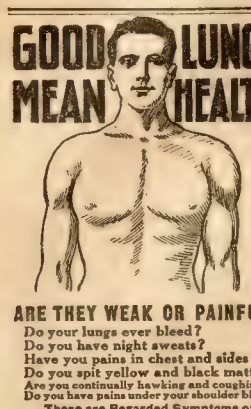
The pounding of the ax no longer came as distinctly as before. Karl did not believe from this circumstance that it meant the aim of the desperate invaders had been accomplished as yet; but rather that distance, and the deadening power of the earth and rock above their heads, brought about this result.

He began to experience a sudden hope that they must be nearing the terminus of Old Luke's hide-out tunnel, for he could feel that it was surely rising. Then his groping hand struck some obstruction ahead. It marked the end of the crooked hole, which had turned this way and that in order to avoid the great rocks. A quick examination with his hands—because eyes were utterly useless in such Stygian gloom—told Karl that some slabs of wood had been placed there in the form of a barricade, and then doubtless covered with earth and vines.

He pushed against the barrier. It refused to give way at first, because possibly years had elapsed since it was completed; but Karl was not to be denied, when there was so much at stake; his next effort was of such a vigorous nature that the mask was torn aside. With a crumbling sound earth, weeds, and slabs fell, leaving the two fugitives facing the moonlight on the side of the mountain.

And just then there came a crash and an excited chorus of savage yells from

(Continued on page sixteen.)



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absolutely that Lung Germine, the German Treatment, has cured completely and permanently case after case of Tuberculosis, Chronic Bronchitis, Catarrh of the Lungs, Catarrh of the Bronchial Tubes and other lung troubles Many sufferers who had lost all hope and who had been given up by physicians have been permanently cured by Lung Germine. It is not only a cure for Tuberculosis but a preventative. If your lungs are merely weak and the disease has not yet manifested itself, you can prevent its development, you can build up your lungs and system to their normal strength and capacity Lung Germine has cured advanced Tuberculosis, in many cases over five years ago, and the patients remain strong and in splendid health today.

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We will gladly send you the proof of many remarkable cures, also a FREE TRIAL of Lung Germine together with our new 40-page book (in colors) on the treatment and care of Tuberculosis and lung trouble.

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10c a Gallon 100 Proof Whiskey

One Distiller the Gigantic Whiskey Trust Can't Down—Deals Knock-Out Blow to Bloated Octopus by Starting Sensational Price-Cutting War.

It takes a man with lots of nerve—one who has the courage of his convictions—to buck up single handed against a mighty, remorseless trust like the gigantic billion dollar whiskey trust. Yet that is just what "Lakewood, the Trust Buster" of Kansas City is doing. If there's anything the trust hates it is the honest competition of a fearless, independent distiller and it is doing its best to force Lakewood out of business.

He tells them to do their worst, but he also believes that in business, as in everything else, the man who hits hardest and truest will win the fight. He has struck the first blow by announcing that from now on 'till further notice he will sacrifice his entire immense quantity of rare old whiskey by selling it direct to the consumers at a profit of only 10c a gallon. By distilling in enormous quantities, he has brought the cost of producing the very finest quality of whiskey down to $1.86 a gallon, including all government taxes and incidental expenses, and he now offers it direct from distillery to consumer with only 10c a gallon added, or $1.96 a gallon.

He says that while of course he could sell to better advantage and at a larger profit through the regular liquor and saloon trade, it would necessarily bring him in direct contact with the Whiskey Trust, but this he refuses to do because the Trust would turn right around and crush him at the first opportunity, as it is trying its best to do now. If the people will stand by him in his fight by ordering their whiskey direct from him at only $1.96 a gallon—better whiskey than that for which the Trust asks from $3.50 to $5.00 a gallon—he says he is bound to win. And the best part of it is that the consumers reap the benefit by getting the best whiskey it is possible to produce at practically the cost of making.

Orders for this fine, rare old whiskey will be filled by sending them to "Lakewood, the Trust Buster," Dept. 107, Kansas City, Mo.

HOSIERY Six pairs Men's Egyptian Cotton, 70c. Last six Lisle Finish, 85c. Postpaid. Write for price list. TAMARACK CO., 55 B. Court St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

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I now desire to give others an opportunity to see and hear this superb piano, because I know its popularity will be as great throughout the country as it is in Des Moines. So I propose to place one in each locality because I know that no other piano on earth can compare with it for tone, beauty and durability, and because I am positive that many other sales will be the direct result of one of these fine pianos being placed in any neighborhood. Just mail coupon below. I will ship direct to your home, without cost to you, a magnificent *Evans Artist's Model Piano.*

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I will pay the freight. I ask no money in advance—not a cent of deposit of any kind. If the *EVANS ARTISTS MODEL* is not all I claim for it—if you do not consider it as fine a piano in *every* respect as any piano you ever saw costing twice as much at retail—you may send it back and I'll pay the return charges. If you decide to keep it, I'll name you the rock-bottom *wholesale* price which means

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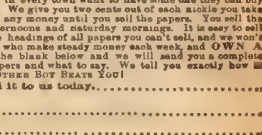

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The Proof.

"And she is reckoned one of the aristocracy in Kentucky?"

"Oh, decidedly! Her family feuds with the very best people there!"

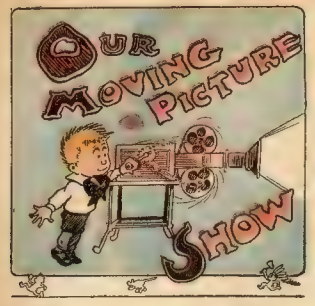
Anxious to Oblige.

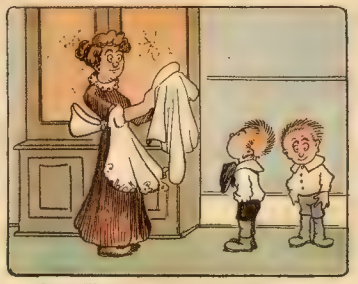
Nervous Visitor—"Will your dog bite me, little boy?"

Eager Little Boy—"If you want to see, I can sick him on you."

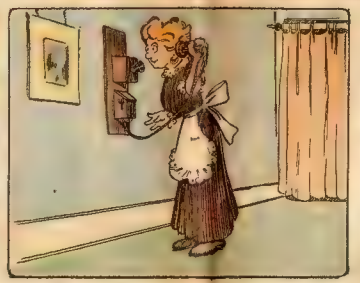
The Eternal Question.

Chronic Magazine Fiend (looking at pile just received)—"I wonder, now, in which one is that nice continued story that I started last month?"—Puck.



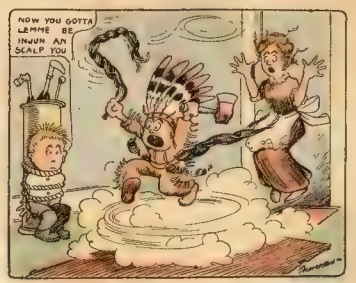


Jimmy—"Maw can me an' Willie play Injun?"
Mrs. Brown—"Yes, dear, but don't be rough with you?"



"Hello, hello, Mrs. Hunter—Oh is this the day of Skinner's remnant sale" Yes, I'll fix my hair and come right over."

Well, I've looked high and low for my puffs and switches! Where on earth can they be?"



Mrs. Brown—"Help! No wonder I couldn't find them! What will those boys do next?"

Necessity Works Wonders.

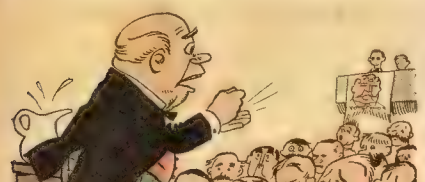
"So you flew four hundred miles without a stop? I didn't think one could make so long a flight with an aeroplane."

"I had to do it. I didn't have the money to ship the machine by freight."

A Distinction.

He—"But she has everything she needs to make her happy."

She—"But it's the things she does not need that a woman needs to make her happy."



Frantic Orator—"Yah-er, yah-er, yah—I believe in free speech."
Angry Little Man—"Do you suppose any one would pay to hear you?"

Perverted Logic.

"That man made a fortune while he was in jail."

"Yes," replied the consistent kicker, "what chance have I had? I never was in jail in my life."

He Is Not Sure.

"John, am I all right for the theater?"

"My dear, I hardly know what you consider all right. You have a dash of powder on each ear, but none on the top of your nose."

The Dude—"Blue and white lends' Bravo! Blue and white are my colors!"
The Peach—"What—your colors? Have you a racing stable?"
The Dude—"No—but those are the colors of my underwear!"

Getting It All.

The doctor told him he needed carbohydrates, proteids, and, above all, something nitrogenous. The doctor mentioned a long list of foods for him to eat. He staggered out and wabbled into a restaurant.

"How about the beefsteak?" he asked the waiter. "Is that nitrogenous?"

The waiter didn't know.

"Are fried potatoes rich in carbohydrates or not?"

The waiter couldn't say.

"Well, I'll fix it," declared the poor man in despair. "Bring me a large plate of hash."

A Fellow Feeling.

The hold-up man had his victim covered. Suddenly the latter, with hands held up, broke into a violent fit of sneezing.

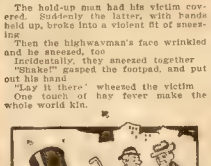
Then the highwayman's face wrinkled and he sneezed, too.

Incidentally, they sneezed together.

"Shake!" gasped the footpad, and put out his hand.

"Lay it there!" wheezed the victim.

One touch of hay fever make the whole world kin.



Henpeck—"That man made a lot of trouble for me."
Henderson—"A hasbody, eh?"
Henpeck—"No; preacher. He married me."

Her Idea of Married Men.

Mr. Crimsonbeak—"This paper says that among every 1,000 bachelors there are thirty-eight criminals, or an average. Among married men the ratio is eighteen per 1,000."

Mrs. Crimsonbeak—"Where do you suppose they got those figures?"

"Oh, from the prisons, I suppose."

"I thought so. If all the married men were put where they belong, the figures would be very different."

Drug-store Sarcasm.

A man entered a drug store very hurriedly and asked for a dozen two-grain quinine pills.

"Do you want them put in a box, sir?" asked the clerk, as he was counting them out.

"Oh, no, certainly not," replied the customer, "I was thinking of rolling them home."

A Declaration of Love.

Plain but Wealthy Spinster (to impecunious suitor, as they walk through a portion of their great estate)—"Do you truly love me, Clarence?"

Clarence—"I worship the very ground you walk on."

"I wish you would give me something, doctor, that would put me on my feet."

"Buy an automobile; then, when you buy an ambulance to get home in, you will have to walk back."

One Economy.

Uncle Ezra—This here Government is runnin' awful extravagantly.

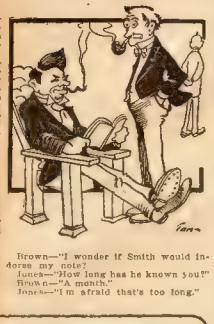
Uncle Eben—Yes; just see how much they spend for these weather bureaus when they could just as well go by the patent medicine almanacs—Puck.

The Demand.

"I shall not run for office," said the eminent statesman, "unless there is an overwhelming popular demand for me."

"Well?"

"It is now up to me to get busy and create that overwhelming demand."



Brown—"I wonder if Smith would indorse my note?"

Jones—"How long has he known you?"

Brown—"A month."

Jones—"I'm afraid that's too long."

He—"Yes, indeed, they have modified football a great deal, so I've been told."

She—"Made it gentler, have they?"

He—"Yes. After jumping on an opponent, the rule now is to beg his pardon."

Not Particular.

One day a farmer entered a Hoosier store and asked if he could exchange some butter for hardware. The humor of the thing appealed to the proprietor.

"Why, certainly," he said. "Take the butter right up to the house. My wife is not at all particular."

The Hoosier farmer looked him over slowly and critically from head to foot and then drawled out: "Land o' Goshen! I should say not!"

Poor Johnny.

"Mother," called Johnny, "these trousers that you made me are too tight."

"No, no they are not, Johnny," answered his mother.

"They are so, mother; they're tighter'n my own skin."

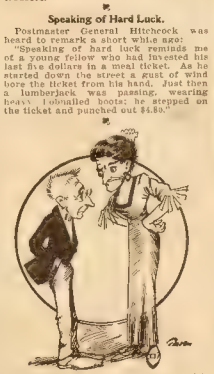
Now, Johnny, you know that isn't so."

"It is so, mother. I can sit down in my skin and I can't sit down in my trousers."

Speaking of Hard Luck.

Postmaster General Hitchcock was heard to remark a short while ago:

"Speaking of hard luck reminds me of a young fellow who had invested his last five dollars in a meal ticket. As he started down the street a gust of wind bore the ticket from his hand. Just then a lumberjack was passing, wearing heavy, hobnailed boots; he stepped on the ticket and punched out $4.80."



Mrs. Nagg—"I suppose now you wish you were free to marry again?"

Mr. Nagg—"No. Just free."

Stopped Him.

"How's that girl whose face you said was like a picture?"

"I called on her just last night. I intended to propose."

"And did you?"

"No, her face was too much like a negative."

A Creditor in Doubt.

"Have you ever loaned Brown any money?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know? How is that?"

"I transferred some to him, but I'm not sure yet whether he considers it a loan or a present."

Reminiscent.

He—"Before I married you I never thought of saving."

She—"And now?"

He—"Now I am always thinking what a lot I could have saved if I hadn't married you!"

Evidently in Earnest.

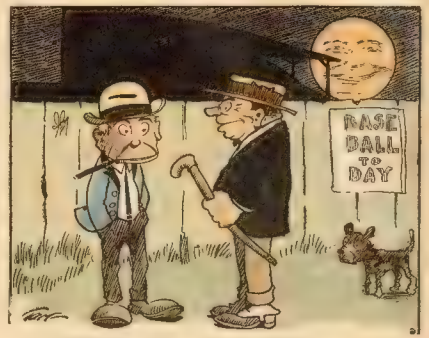
"That young man who is coming to see daughter," said mother. "I wonder if his intentions are serious?"

"Yes, I think they are," said father. "He has given me several very good cigars of late."

The World of Letters.

"Your musical comedy is absolutely without literary quality."

"You wrong us," replied the great producer. "That dance music is full of foot notes, and our chorus ladies are fine specimens of the latest display type."



"I see that the game was called on account of darkness."
"Yes, it got so that we couldn't see to hit the umpire."

Love That Never (Minds) Dyes.

Mrs. Flipp—"I wonder if my husband will love me when my hair is gray."

Her Friend—"Of course he will. He's loved you through three shades of hair already."

An Extravagant Comparison.

"There doesn't seem to be any hustle at all about that boy of Dascomb's."

"Hustle! Say, if there was any chance to fit up a race between Steve Dascomb and a glacier, I'd back the glacier."

Slouchy Dan—"How long do ye think an animal can live without brains?"
Weary Willie—"Dunno. How old are ye, Slouch?"

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An Aeroplane Elopement.

(Continued from page thirteen.)

some distance away, telling that the door had been finally smashed in!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FLIGHT OF THE BIPLANE.

Hastily the revenue man scrambled out of the tunnel and helped his sweetheart to gain a footing on the solid earth.

"Come, we must hurry!" she gasped, plucking at his sleeve, for she dreaded lest at any moment now they might hear the exultant cry that would announce the discovery of their means of flight, and this would mean a hot pursuit.

They went on as fast as they could. Polly was leading him down toward the road, meaning to take advantage of its open nature. On the side of the mountain the outcropping rocks, and the fallen timber, made traveling exceedingly difficult, so that there was always danger of their enemies outstripping them in the race to the spot where the waiting aeroplane lay.

Now the road was gained, and progress could be considerably augmented. Little they cared because, when passing a cabin here and there, they found themselves objects of curiosity on the part of women and children, who, hearing the sounds coming from the Johnson cabin, could not remain indoors. Karl only hoped and prayed that none of these Amazons might feel disposed to interfere with their flight, and thus bring about new complications. Surely they had enough trouble on their hands as it was, without other trials and tribulations.

He was glad that he had been so favored by the winds of chance as to land not very far from the Johnson habitation; for the time had come when distance was to cut an important part in the question as to whether they were to escape, or be overhauled. And as they pushed steadily along, with Polly more than once tripping, in her eagerness to hasten, and being upheld by the arm of her lover, there came a roar of men's voices from the rear

"They have found how we got out. Is that the meaning of that shout, Karl?" the girl gasped, for she was almost out of breath.

"Yes, I suppose so," the other replied, trying to speak calmly, although his heart, too, was pumping tumultuously with the excitement. "But we must be close to the place now, dearest?"

"It is near by, just beyond that clump of trees," came the faint answer.

Karl looked down at her face, as seen in the bright moonlight. It seemed startlingly pale, and filled him with sudden dread.

"Are you ill? Shall I carry you the rest of the way?" he demanded, at which she tried to laugh, though the effort was not very flattering.

"No, no, it is not that I am about to faint; but fear seems to weaken me. I shall make it, all right, dear Karl. I am only thinking what a terrible thing it would be if some one had been tampering with your machine, so that it refused to work!"

Strangely enough, that was the one thing which he too, dreaded; but he knew he must not allow her to see that he had any anxiety.

"Little danger of that, I guess," he managed to say, as they struggled along. "He told me he would guarantee that not a single hand touched it; and you see it was his hope to get me on my way in as big a hurry as he could. No fear but we'll find it all right, darling. And here we are!"

They had turned the point marked by the line of trees. The open space was before them, the same that Karl had selected as his landing-stage, at the time he purposely made it appear as though he had met with an accident, while trying to surmount the summit of the high ridge.

His anxious eyes instantly sought the ground in search of the precious biplane. A blur met his gaze, which in the deceptive moonlight he realized must in all probability be what he sought. This proved to be the case, and quickly they hurried along, until presently they stood beside the aeroplane that was stretched along the ground, its box-like wings looking weird and uncanny in the light of the moon.

Without losing a moment of time, Karl flew around in front until he could get at the engine, and start it going. His heart seemed to be in his mouth, and he ceased breathing for the time being, such was his intense anxiety. For should some difficulty arise, such as frequently affected the motors by means of which air craft are pushed along their course, the delay in this instance must be fatal, since it would allow those grim pursuers to come up, and block the flight entirely.

Just then the moon chose to vanish behind a big bank of dark clouds. It seemed most unkind, when so much depended on their being able to make a start; but after all, this might prove a blessing in disguise. Karl had looked ahead, and knew that under certain conditions darkness was to be preferred to moonlight, after the biplane had ascended; because those who were running that way carried rifles, and knew how to use them only too well, given the chance to sight the quarry, whether it be a jumping deer, a sailing hawk, or a spinning aeroplane. Even though the plunging lead failed to touch either of the fugitives, if it came in contact with some part of the motor, the result was apt to be disastrous.

There came a sudden whirring sound that caused Polly to utter a little shriek of dismay; for up to now she had doubtless never been so close to one of those airy products of man's invention, by means of which he braves the air currents with the nerve of an eagle.

"It works all right!" exclaimed the delighted Karl. "Come, let me place you in your seat, dearest. Only remember, not to move any more than you can help; and oh! I beg of you to hold on, both to the stanchion on one side, and me on the other."

Even while he was speaking after this manner Karl was fixing his sweetheart in the seat alongside his own usual position.

"Do not fear for me; I shall not do anything to worry you, Karl!" she exclaimed, having somehow managed to recover her breath and apparently more or less of her natural bravery, after learning that the vehicle by which they hoped to attain safety was uninjured.

So the young aviator instantly took his place. He could hear loud voices not a great way off, and knew that the eager bunch of mountaineers under Jack Lawson must be running toward the spot, fully conscious of the fact that the man they sought would try to make his escape by means of his wonderful air machine. It were folly to wait longer, when peril hovered so close by.

"Are you all ready, darling?" Karl asked, as his hand gripped the lever, and he prepared himself for the start.

"Yes, yes, please don't lose a second more!" she answered, listening to the coarse voice she despised so thoroughly, as Jack urged his companions to increase their pace, his ears having caught the whir of the little motor, which came as a warning that the crisis had arrived.

Then Karl, knowing that all was well manipulated his levers, and with a steadily increasing whish the biplane started down the slight slope.

It was well that he had closely examined every foot of the ground when here attending to the repairing of the air craft. Conditions could hardly have been more propitious for a clear start, since he had removed the few little obstructions that had lain in the way.

Doubtless the novel sensation actually took Polly's very breath away; but that trundling over the ground was as nothing compared to the feeling that came upon her when the biplane, having attained a speed suitable to the necessity, Karl slanted his forward plane so that, catching the resistance of the air, they immediately commenced to leave the ground and ascend.

An exultation filled the breast of the young aviator as he felt himself being thus borne away from the seat of danger in his staunch air craft, with the girl he loved so dearly seated at his side. In his brightest dreams he could hardly have imagined such a happy condition as this. And how little had he known, when planning his bold dash into the very heart of the moonshiners' country, what a glorious outcome awaited him.

Higher they soared, as Karl increased the speed of the faithful little motor. The humming of the engine was as sweetest music in his ears, because with every rod passed over, the danger of being struck by some flying bullet decreased.

Then came a shot, at which Polly shuddered; but they could plainly hear the whine of the lead as it hurtled through space far to one side, and from this fact understood that no damage would follow. Other shots followed; but that friendly cloud covered the face of the moon, so that her treacherous light was

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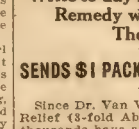

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not allowed to betray them to their enemies, who, consequently, were only firing at random in the quarter where they heard the constantly diminishing whirr of the motor.

"Safe at last, thank God!" cried Karl, when there came no more discharges from their rear. "And now, all that I have to do is to manage that we make a quick passage to some town in the lowlands, where we can drop down and—find a minister who will make me the happiest man in the world."

Polly said nothing. She knew that it was not worth while trying to argue that point, since Karl was so set in his way. And perhaps there is more or less truth in the old belief that a woman likes to be boldly wooed by a masterful lover, provided, always, that she returns the affection he professes.

For a long time they sailed thus through space, with Polly clinging trustfully to the man she loved. Above them the fair moon shone again; beneath all was vague and uncertain; for they were sailing at quite a height above the earth, and speeding along toward the east, Karl having taken his bearings with a knowledge as to the point of the compass he wished to head for.

Then came the time when they sank lower. The mountains had long since been left behind, and the low country lay beneath them. Polly presently declared that she could see lights, and from this they knew they were getting near a town.

Lower still did Karl allow his biplane to drop, until they moved along at a diminished speed not so very far above the tops of the trees. In this way, then, he presently found a chance to make a circuit, and drop into a pasture, knowing that here he would in all probability find level ground.

The landing was made without accident, thanks to the knowledge of the man who guided the destinies of the biplane. Like a great box kite the air craft settled in the middle of the field, and Karl was soon helping his companion to alight.

"Heaven has been very good to us, dear Pauline," he said, reverently, as he held her in his arms, and pressed kisses upon her sweet mouth, her cheeks, her eyes, after the manner of an adoring lover.

"But we must not remain here long," she warned him.

"You are right; and as we seem to be on the border of a town, I've no doubt we can find an obliging minister who will grant my earnest plea. Come, then, darling, and trust your future happiness with one who loves you as few men have loved before."

Well, the die was cast, and as circumstances over which she could exercise no control had forced her to elope with the master of a biplane, there was, of course, nothing else to be done; so they presently found the parsonage, where the few words necessary were said that gave Polly into the keeping of Karl Bennings for all time.

In due time communications were opened with Old Luke, who had been prudent enough to refrain from starting a war of retaliation upon the Lawson clan; and presently he even journeyed down from his mountain fastness to visit his girl.

Later on, the once talked-of moonshiner actually moved his still from the lofty retreat to the town where Karl and his wife had their home, far from the Big Smokies; and here was started the business of manufacturing that wonderful tonic, by means of which the partners, Jud Grenfells and Luke Johnson, were destined to reap a fortune, since its real merits brought about a constantly increasing sale.

Long since Karl quit the Government service. His wife would never consent to his again risking his precious life among those rough mountaineers. And remembering what reason Jack Lawson had for hating the man who had eloped with his expected wife, she could not keep from shuddering every time memory carried her back to those eventful times when, drifting with the winds of chance, Karl had dropped to earth close by the humble cabin where dwelt the girl for whom he had sought far and wide. But fortunately, neither of them ever set eyes again on the young mountaineer, who, at last accounts, had married another girl, doubtless continuing to follow the life of a moonshiner, and bearing an especial hatred toward all revenue men.

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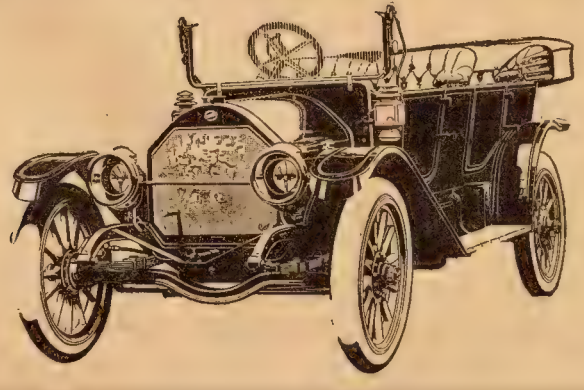

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Chicago Ledger

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Five-Word Bear Story.

There were six stalwart pioneers who settled in Upshur County, West Virginia, long before the war, when there wasn't "a stick amiss" and hunting was good. They were brothers and their name was Phillips.

Each fall after hog-killing time they held a family reunion, at which a feast fit for the gods was partaken of in silence, except for the blessing, which was always asked by the elder brother. They did not believe in much talk or levity. When they spoke it was usually in monosyllables. After dinner they would sit around the big log fireplace, tilted back in split-bottom chairs, and smoke their corncob pipes in silence until it was time to go home and do the chores.

At one of the reunions something of unusual interest occurred—one of the boys told a bear story. While sitting around the fire smoking one of the brothers pushed up his sleeve, exposing a badly lacerated arm. The other five gazed at it in respectful silence for a few moments. Their experience in the mountains told them that their brother had had a hand-to-hand fight with a bear. One of them opened the ensuing dialogue with:

"Um-mph—bar?"

"Yes-ah."

"Whar?"

"Over thar," jerking his thumb back over his shoulder in the direction of Beech Mountain.

After this bear story of five words they smoked in silence until it was time to go home. For months after that reunion they would remark to visiting neighbors that they had "a powerful fine time at Eben's reunion."

* * *

In the Old-Fashioned Way.

The old-fashioned domestic woman was telling the young housekeeper how to make soda biscuit, according to the New York Evening Sun.

"You take," said she, "some milk or sour cream."

"How much?"

"As much as you can spare," said the old-fashioned domestic woman. "Then you sift your flour with your baking powder—if you use it."

"How much flour?" asked the young housekeeper.

"That depends, of course, on the amount of milk and the number of people you are baking for," said the old-fashioned domestic woman. "Then you make a dough that is stiff enough——"

"How stiff is that?"

"Well, that you will have to learn by experience."

"Rub in the butter just before you add the milk, and while you mustn't scrimp the butter you must be careful not to use too much. Then you either drop the dough with a spoon or cut it with a biscuit cutter. The oven must be just hot enough, and not too hot; and be sure to take the biscuits out the moment they are done."

"How can I tell when they're done?" asked the young housekeeper.

"Why, they'll look just right when they're ready," said the old-fashioned domestic woman.

A Practical Question.

Speaking of that old-fashioned quality, common sense, Doctor Faulkner, head of the Vineland Hospital in New Jersey, told the following story:

A building had been erected on the outskirts of a small town. It was shrouded in mystery. All that was known about it was that it was a chemical laboratory. An old farmer, driving past the place after work had been started, and seeing a man in the doorway, called to him: "What be ye doin' in this place?"

"We are searching for a universal solvent—something that will dissolve all things," said the chemist.

"What good will thet be?"

"Imagine sir! It will dissolve all things. If we want a solution of iron, glass, gold, —anything,—all that we have to do is to drop it in this solution."

"Fine!" said the farmer, "fine! What be ye goin' to keep it in?"

* * *

Frank if Not Honest.

Senator John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi, had occasion to hire a colored man to work around his house. There were several applicants, but the waiting list had finally reduced to one man.

The Senator cross-questioned the man carefully. After he had gone into his antecedents and all that he asked, "Are you honest?"

"Honest? Sho' I is. I's bin arrested foh stealin' three times an' let off ebery time."

Their Banishment.

"Well, I'd like to know why not!" Githers paused in the doorway, the picture of amazed protest. In one hand he held the evening paper and a magazine, in the other a cigar. On his feet were slippers, around his form was a smoking jacket. A straight line drawn to the nearest object from him would have ended at the easy-chair comfortably turned toward the electric lamp on the table. It was a chair that Githers had sat in after dinner for more evenings than he could count. "Why," he repeated, "can't I go in there and read? What do you mean, mother?"

Mrs. Githers approached him and picked a thread off his sleeve. "Wouldn't you just as soon sit upstairs with me?" she asked brightly. "I'm going to sew."

"What of it?" demanded her husband. "Don't you usually sew downstairs here? Don't we always sit downstairs? Why—"

"My goodness, John!" exclaimed his wife impatiently. "Wouldn't you like a change?"

"Elmira," said Githers, firmly, "you're hiding something—tell me at once!"

"Simply nothing," said his wife, "only Grace is going to have a caller this evening and I wanted to let the child have the livingroom—oh, it's one of the boys in her class and it's all right, so you needn't glare. She's 17 and must have friends among the boys as other girls do. Not that she wouldn't just as soon have us there, but we'd embarrass them!"

"What the dickens!" growled Githers, turning toward the stairs. "Pretty state of things when I can't use my own chair! Callers at her age! Umph!"

Mrs. Githers got him nicely arranged in her room, and as she reached for the mending basket she paused, hand in air. The front door had slammed and a vast whistling heralded the entrance of the son and heir of the household. Mrs. Githers went and leaned over the banisters.

"Rob!" she called, in dulcet tones.

"Hullo!" came the inquiring answer. "Where are you? Where is everybody? Who's sick?"

"Come up," said his mother. "Wouldn't you like to sit up here with father and me?" she wheedled as he arrived at the door. "Here's a nice comfortable chair and——"

"What's the matter with the livingroom?" he demanded in amazement. "Why——"

Mrs. Githers sighed. "I never saw such stupid men folks!" she declared. "Why can't you do things without having them all explained, I'd like to know? Grace has a caller coming and——"

"Whoopee-e-e!" shouted Grace's brother, making a dart for her door. "Who's your beau, sis? Who've you got a crush on——"

"Mother!" came Grace's indignant voice. "Make Bob stop! I think he's perfectly horrid! I haven't got a crush on anybody, and you know it, Bob Githers, and I perfectly hate you, so there now!"

"Children!" cried Mrs. Githers. "I'm surprised at both of you. Stop it at once!"

"Well, I'd like a look at the chump who's so important that I'm barred out of my happy home," protested her son. "Gee! There isn't anything to do up here! I'm going out!"

"No, please don't!" urged his distracted mother. "I'll read out loud to you and dad!"

"Mother!" called her daughter, frantically. "Come and tell me how my hair looks."

Left to themselves Githers and his son stared dismally at each other.

"Some doings, eh?" queried young Githers. "Tommyrot, I call it! Will sis be doing this every night forever'n ever till she's married off? I'm going to move if she does."

"This chair," said his father, irritably, "was built for a boa constrictor, not a man. And where are the matches?"

Mrs. Githers came back and Grace floated downstairs. She played a piece on the piano exactly as though she expected no one and then she walked about. The men folks fidgeted. Then the telephone rang.

Presently Grace called dolefully upstairs, "Tom can't come! He's got an awful cold! Isn't that bor-r-id!"

Githers and his son reached the bottom of the stairs simultaneously.

"My, but I'm sorry for Tom!" said Githers as he grabbed the easy-chair.

Another Like Him.

Simple Lifer (who is doing a walking tour of the hills)—"I don't expect you see many strangers up here?"

Old Shepherd (reflectively)—"Well, there's yersel' the day, and there was anither tramp hereabouts last week."

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ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

He Was Polite.

A young man who had never testified before was called before the court as a witness in a certain case. He was somewhat flustrated over the attention that was being paid him, and mumbled his words so that the young woman stenographer could not hear them distinctly. He was told to speak plainly and to turn toward the stenographer.

"Speak to the stenographer," said the prosecutor.

At that the young man arose and with a deep bow to the lady said, "How do you do?"

Found His "Lamb."

Last summer a Cleveland traveling man was married, and was given a month's vacation. He and his bride spent their honeymoon in a quiet summer resort.

One evening, as they entered the dining-room and sat down, as usual, in a secluded corner, the young husband noticed a very good customer at the table near by.

"Say, dearest," he whispered, "there's Mr. Jones over there. You won't mind if I go over and dine with him, will you? Think how fine it will be if I get back from my wedding trip with a smashing big order."

The little bride agreed, rather ruefully. Her traveling man hurried over to Jones, shook hands with him, and ordered his dinner, which included roast lamb. Then he began to talk business.

He was so earnest about it that he didn't notice when the waiter removed his meat dishes and placed a dessert before him. Then suddenly he looked down at his plate and exclaimed:

"Why, where's my lamb?"

A little voice in the corner piped out: "Here I am, dear!"

The Difference.

Gelett Burgess, the author of books of sense and nonsense, at a dinner in New York, was urging a subtler use of words:

"Use words with delicate care," he said. "Observe all their subtle distinctions. Never write 'vision,' for instance, when 'sight' is what you mean.

"There's no difference between 'sight' and 'vision,' interrupted an editor

"No," said Mr. Burgess. "And yet, Herbert, when you and I passed each other on Forty-second street yesterday, the girl I was with was a vision, while the one with you was a sight."

A Cynical Aphorism.

Brand Whitlock, reform mayor of Toledo, brilliant novelist, and successful lawyer, was condemning the corrupt practices by which a certain Ohio millionaire had made his millions.

"When I think of men like this," he said, rather bitterly, "I feel like venting an aphorism, a cynical aphorism, namely:

"The richer a man is, the less he is worth."

Yes, Indeed!

A Massachusetts family had a family horse of which they were very fond. When it got too old for service they sent it to spend its declining years in the pastures of a farmer friend.

Inasmuch as the distance would be too much for old Frank he was shipped by rail to his new home.

Among those who watched his departure with regret was the owner's 8-year-old daughter.

For a long time she sat gloomily looking out of a window. At last, after a deep sigh, she turned with a cheerful expression to her father and said:

"I was just thinking how funny old Frank must look sitting on plush cushions."

Taking No Chances.

A Pittsburgh man, visiting in Youngstown, had to drop a note to his stenographer.

"What is the proper way to address a young lady?" he asked his host. "Would you say, 'My Dear Miss,' 'Dear Miss' or what——?"

"Just address her as you would in the office," advised the friend.

"Oh, that would never do," the visitor exclaimed; "suppose my wife should get the letter?"

Finesse.

Senator Cummins, discussing a campaign victory, said with a smile:

"It was won by finesse. The finesse displayed in it reminds me of a Concord banquet.

"'Why is it that you fellows are omitting wine from your banquet this year?' one Concord man asked another.

"'So as to make sure of the presence of Depew, Tom Daly, Simeon Ford and the other A1 after dinner speakers of the country,' was the reply. 'We have invited them, and they won't dare to stay away.'

"'Why not?'

"'For the reason that, if they did, people would say it was because there was no wine, you know.'"

The Full Name.

One of the New York representatives in Congress tells of a social function in an assembly district political club on the East Side where the chairman of the entertainment committee acted as master of ceremonies.

The chairman was very busy introducing the newly arrived members of the club to the guests, who included a number of municipal officers. The representative mentioned was presented in a way to halve his official honors with his wife, as "the Honorable and Mrs. Congressman Blank." Next came a couple who were not known to the master of ceremonies, but, after receiving the correct name in a whisper, he announced:

"Mr. and Mrs. Inspector of Hydrants. Faucets and Shop Works Casey."

The Fool Question.

Brown came downtown the other morning with a somewhat bruised and swollen forehead. His friend Briggs viewed the contusion with interest and asked:

"How did it happen, old man?"

"Collided with the hatrack last night," said Brown shortly.

"Accidentally?" asked Briggs

"No, Driggs," replied Brown sweetly, "I have every reason to suspect that it attacked me purposely."

When Honors Come Singly.

A negro, representing a small negro school, traveled through the South, conferring the degree of Doctor of Divinity on all preachers who could raise fifty dollars for expenses.

He got into a small Georgia town one day and told a negro minister he could have the degree of D. D. for fifty dollars. The preacher was taken with the idea; but when the night for the conferring came he sadly announced to the assembled congregation and the degree conferrer that he had been able to raise only twenty-seven dollars.

The degree conferrer refused to cut the rate.

"In that case," spoke up one of the deacons, "an' inasmuch as we has twenty-seven dollahs, I move that on this occasion we pay the man the twenty-seven dollahs, an' instid of gittin' D. D. that we be content with our pastor havin' one D!"

Knew Whereof He Spoke.

Mrs. Humphry Ward and her voluminous and heavy novels were being discussed at the Franklin Inn in Philadelphia. A poet said:

"I met the Humphry Wards during the last London season. Poor Humphry himself is rather overshadowed by his wife, and I think he feels it. At a dinner a lady said:

"'In olden times men claimed that it was possible for them to make themselves invisible.'

"'That is still possible, madam,' said Humphry Ward, in his grave, sad way.

"'Possible for a man to make himself invisible!' the lady cried. 'How on earth can he do it?'

"'By captivating a celebrated woman,' was the reply."

Not Needed.

It was the anniversary of his young son's birthday, and the proud father, who felt that he ought to give the lad something, stepped into a bookseller's shop

"What kind of a book would you like, sir?" asked the assistant to whom the other had confided his purpose.

"Something that would be useful and educative," said the father, forgetting that he always detested such books in his own boyhood.

"Well, here is a very excellent one on 'Self-help.'"

"Self-help!" exclaimed the father. "Ben don't need anything of that kind. You ought to see him at the dinner table!"

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His One Desire.

"Grace," he said enthusiastically, "I have a question to ask you."

"Yes," she said softly and prepared to listen.

"I hope you won't think it impertinent, or take it as an attempt upon my part to interfere with your own prospects."

"Oh, George——"

"But you are so much cleverer than I."

"You mustn't say that."

"You are. I've been going with you a long while now, and I've had time to see it. You are musical, and understand——"

"Go on."

"I was going to say that you understand the poets, and all that, so much better than I. Your family is literary, whereas mine is not. My father is but a humble bookkeeper. You have taken first honors in college. I have had to earn my own living always."

"That makes no difference to me, George."

"I know it doesn't, Grace. But now I've come to you for help. I feel that I cannot hope for success without your assistance."

"I am sure, George, that you will always find me willing to do anything in my power to help you."

"I knew you would be. It but confirms my first impression of you. And you will help me?"

"Yes, I will."

"Then give me a rhyme for Cadillaqua. There are twenty-five beans in it for me if I win."

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___If you have palpitation of your heart.
___If your hands and feet get cold easily.
___If you have any form of hemorrhoids.
___If you belch up wind from your stomach.
___If you have kidney or bladder trouble.
___If you have itching or burning of your skin.
___If your bowels are irregular or constipated.
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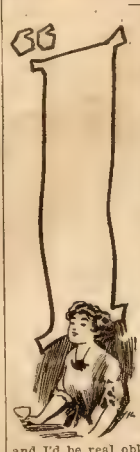

"I WAS to supper with Grandmother Kelly last night," Miss Connelly informed Miss Frixkle, as she threw herself on the couch in the rest room, "and of all the fun!" She paused and her face broke into a reminiscent smile. "She ain't my real grandmaw, you know. She's paw's first wife's maw, but us kids has always called her grandmother. She lives 'way out on the West Side and she gets awful sore if one of us youngsters don't go out and take supper and spend the night with her about once in every so often.

"Last night it was my turn and when I got there Grandmother Kelly says to me, 'Nellie,' she says, 'I asked poor old Grandmaw Getchell to come over tonight and I'd be real obliged if you'd run over to her son's place and fetch her. Like as not that daughter-in-law of hers'll let her start out by herself, and if that poor old thing should fall down I bet she'd break some of her bones. They gits awful brittle, you know, as a person gits older.' It was funny because Grandmother Kelly ain't more'n a couple of years younger than Grandmaw Getchell."

"I was just startin' to pike over and get Grandmaw Getchell when the old lady come hoppin' up the stairs, spry's you please. Grandmother Kelly runs to the door. 'Why, grandmaw,' she says, 'did you come all by yourself? I don't think you ought to 'a' done it. It ain't safe for you to come all that way alone.'

"Easier for me—"

"Grandmaw Getchell just pushes past her and begins takin' off her hat and cape and throwin' 'em on the chair. 'Quit "grandmawin" me,' she says. 'I'm just as well able to walk three blocks by myself as I ever was, and a good deal more able than some of these slimjacks that'd crack to pieces if they ever hit the sidewalk.'

"When we sat down to supper Grandmother Kelly says, just as sweet as could be, 'I made some cornbread for supper, grandmaw,' she says, 'cause I thought it would be easy for you to eat. When a person's lost so many of their teeth as what you have I know it's kind of hard for 'em to chew tough things.'

"Grandmaw Getchell begun to swell up. 'I guess you don't need to be so careful of me and my teeth, Moll Kelly,' she says. 'Hard for me to chew?' she snorts, shakin'. 'I guess it's a whole pile easier for me to chew with my teeth that's just 's good as they ever was as it is for you, with them shiny store teeth, that makes you sound like an old steamboat, whistlin' down the river every time you say anything.'

"Grandmother Kelly come right back at her, smilin' and happy. 'Well,' she says, putting a helpin' of creamed chicken on to Grandmaw Getchell's plate, 'it does beat all how some folks gets more satisfaction hangin' on to their poor old snags long after they're past their usefulness than to let 'em go comfortable like and get some good boughten ones.' Then she bustled out to the kitchen so that Grandmaw Getchell wouldn't have time to answer back. When it came to pie time Grandmaw Getchell she started in at it again.

"Ain't had very good luck."

"'It just makes me want to cry,' she says, fetchin' a great big sigh, 'every time I eat lemon cream pie. Mr. Tinkum, him that was my second, he was so partial to it.' Then she looked over at Grandmother Kelly spiteful, and I knew they was about to lock horns again. 'You know I been married three times,' she says to me. 'Mr. Getchell, he was my third.'

"Grandmother Kelly didn't say nothin' for a minute. Then she says, 'Nellie,' she says, 'ain't it funny how some women will marry just anything that comes along, just to show they had the chance?'

"'I don't blame no woman,' says Grandmaw Getchell to me, 'just becuz the men folks don't take to her, but there's some folks not more'n a hundred miles away that didn't get married more'n once for a mighty good and sufficient reason, and that is that they didn't get asked again.'

"Well, you needn't to think that Grandmaw Getchell had any two-thirds of Grandmother Kelly on the mat. Grandmother Kelly was right there with the comeback.

"'Well,' she says, takin' off the lid of the teapot and lookin' in to see if the tea's all gone. 'I always did think the folks that keeps on gittin' married every time they get asked ain't ever had such very good luck. When a person ketches a real good fish, you know, they're pretty likely to be ready to go home and be satisfied.' Then she picked up the teapot and run out into the kitchen.

"Well, they kep' it up the whole blessed evenin', and you'd 'a' died if you could 'a' heard them. Every time Grandmaw Getchell'd get a half nelson on Grandmother Kelly, Grandmother Kelly'd bat back at her and then duck for the kitchen or diningroom, or somewheres, like she had some pressin' business, and by the time she'd get back Grandmaw Getchell'd be all ready with another hot one. The last thing I heard after I went upstairs was Grandmother Kelly sayin', 'Now, you be careful, grandmaw, goin' up them steps. I knew a real stout person that fell down them stairs once and she never walked again.'

"'I guess you better be careful yourself, Moll Kelly,' snorts Grandmaw Getchell; 'if you should tumble downstairs your bones'd crack up like so many icicles.'

"I ducked into my room and pretty near swallowed all the bed clothes tryin' to keep from haw-hawin' right out.

"Say, I bet I been to ten thousand movin' pitcher shows and musical comedies and theayters and things, but for a real, first class, up-to-date continuous show them two old dames has got 'em all beat. They're better'n a couple of three ringed circuses."

Suburban Life.

Jenkins (rhapsodically)—"You know, old man, the beauty of living in the suburbs is that the moment you are on the train, seated comfortably in this club car, and speeding away from the city, your mind mounts above all the prosaic doings of the utilitarian metropolis. The sight of the green things which you see through the car windows causes your soul to be drawn to nature, and, like a cloak, you throw from your shoulders and your consciousness all the mere dross of practical existence and forget completely that the world contains such things as business and money."

Blenkins (dryly)—"Yep. Let us listen for a moment to those about us and enjoy the soaring of their souls."

(They listen.)

"That Panama Canal has cost over $400,000,000, hasn't it?"

"I pay my gardener $30 a month."

"I gave $75,000 for my place."

"It'll cost $1,000 to put in the concrete steps."

"They say Becker got $250,000."

"Brokely lost $100,000 in cotton."

"They wanted $12 a load for it."

"City corn is forty cents, picked ears."

"I took his note for $300."

"That surrey cost me $900.

"I offered him $2,500 for the whole thing."

"They cleared $4,000,000 on the deal."

"He gets $25,000 a year."

"The dues are $100, with docking privileges."

"You owe me $1.25 from yesterday's game."

"Let's match for a dollar a throw."

"They charge $75 a week for my wife and me."

"I save forty cents by taking a week-end excursion ticket."

"Those cigars cost me fifty cents apiece."

"Their net earnings were $1,250,000."

"I wouldn't give you ten cents for it."

"I'll bet you five dollars."

"He gave only one dollar for the charity bridge."

"They failed for $320,000."

"The bank statement showed that there was a deficit of ——"

Blenkins (to Jenkins)—"Well?"

An Apt Answer.

A witty person received a letter the other day, which, to his surprise and disgust, contained only one word, and that word was "Idiot!" As he recognized the handwriting, he proceeded to answer it thus:

"Dear X——I often get letters without signatures, but this is the very first time I have received a signature without a letter. Yours, Z."

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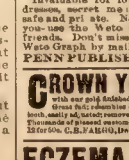

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Our Boys' Corner

Peter, the Boy Patriot

Or, OUTWITTING CORNWALLIS

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 44, Nov. 2. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW DANGER.

WHAT had become of Peter, the young patriot, the released captives of the Charon did not know. They would fain have rowed back and searched for him, but balls from the sailors of the British warship were falling around them like hailstones, and they dared not make the attempt. They were anxious to get beyond the dead line, and their eagerness was strengthened when the big guns of the vessel searched the river for them, and they hastened toward the shore. Peter had been left to his fate.

Captain Gallion, the forayer, declared that he thought the boy had leaped into the boat with the others, but now that he was not to be seen, it was agreed on all sides that he had either been recaptured by the sailors or had perished under the storm of lead.

If the youthful patriot had been closely followed by those who now mourned for him, it would have been seen that he had not suffered in the manner they feared. He had resisted the attack of the British seamen with the courage of a hero, and at the last moment had leaped from the vessel, just missing the boat, and had fallen among the dark waters that surrounded the craft. For a moment he sank out of sight, and when he came to the surface he saw the escaping Americans so far from him that it was useless to attempt to reach them.

It was a miracle that he escaped the pluming shots. They cut the water on every side, and some almost put an end to his adventures. However, strong of limb and a good swimmer, he struck out for the shore, which he could dimly see by the glimmer of the campfires of Yorktown. That it would be dangerous to reach the shore under the British guns he well knew; therefore he swam toward a jutting peak of land which lay below the last battery.

What had become of Captain Gallion and his companions he did not know, but their fate did not trouble him greatly. They would have to shift for themselves, whilst he must look out for number one. It was a long swim and a tiresome one, but with recapture staring him in the face he manfully pushed forward, now and then hearing a hail from the shore which guided him from the points of peril.

At length he clambered upon the point of land, and for a moment shook himself like a water spaniel. He was on land once more, and to his right lay the frowning batteries of Cornwall.

"It's downright luck!" he ejaculated, with a little smile. "Perhaps I have fared better than those in the boat. Now for home."

In a few moments he was making his way landward, passing almost under the frowning guns of one of the water bat

"That man is a spy!"

teries, and hearing the harsh challenge of the sentries.

"Peter!" exclaimed his mother, as he opened the door and stood dripping before her in the candlelight. "You look like a drowned rat. Wherever have you been?"

In truth he was a sorry-looking object, and a grim smile suffused his face when he studied his drenched apparel.

"I would now be worse than a drowned rat if the British balls had found me," he replied. "I managed to get away from the Charon, and I'm not anxious to repeat the experiment."

"But what means all the stir in the camp? One would think from the noise that Washington's whole army had assaulted the entrenchments."

"And I've been the cause of it all," grimly answered Peter. "You see the Charon tried to recapture us, and that has set the land batteries to growling."

A change of clothing set Peter to rights, and he declared that he would go out and ascertain whether Captain Gallion and his friends had been overtaken.

A light in the house occupied by Martin Bolt, the Tory, guided him in that direction, and he was soon ensconced among some shrubbery outside, peering into the parlor. Old Martin was confronted by Gideon Mosket, the spy who was gesticulating in a vehement manner, while words issued from his lips as fast as he could send them.

"The rascally boy did it all!" Gideon

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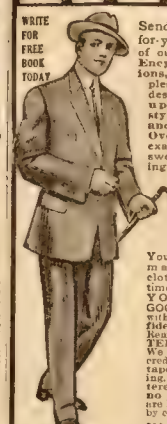

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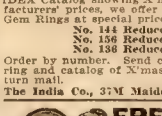

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exclaimed. "He released the Rebels on board the ship, and all have escaped."

Peter heaved a thankful sigh.

"But the boy himself?" asked Martin.

"They don't know what became of him," was the reply. "One of the sailors thinks he was shot in the water, for they say they fired at his bobbing head and that it disappeared."

"Good riddance!" cried the fussy old Tory. "Of course, I would rather have seen him hanged, but if the balls finished him, we shall not be troubled by him any more."

"I'm satisfied, for it leaves a clear field for me," said Gideon. "I can now get a wife."

"And pray, how did the boy interfere with your love-making?"

"The girl thought a good deal of him. He is the rival who stood in my way, but now since he is no longer there, I shall pay Mistress Brewster for her grease by marrying her."

"Don't be so sanguine, Gideon," put in Martin, with doubt in his eyes. "She is Rebel to the core, and you may have some trouble getting her consent to become Mistress Mosket."

"I'm not alarmed about the consent," laughed the spy. "There's more than one way of catching a bird."

Peter remained concealed until the conversation ceased, when he arose and bounded away.

At Silas' house he found that young worthy and Roger, who welcomed him as one risen from the dead.

"We've just been among the soldiers," remarked Silas. "The whole camp is excited. So far as we know they haven't caught Captain Gallion and his men, and ere this, no doubt, they are safe in the American camp. It was a gallant trick,

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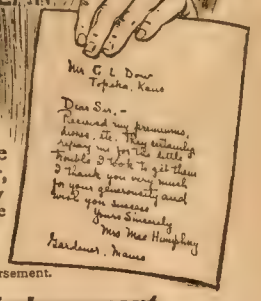

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Peter." He gazed proudly at his friend.

"And it succeeded because I found a nail in my room on board the Charon. It was no trick to bend it, and the lock yielded readily. It was cutting through the wall that took real work. Then, the night favored us; but for all that, if I had not dodged the balls, I would not be here to tell my story of the escape."

"Some of the officers don't think you are dead," Roger said, at this juncture.

"What does General Cornwallis say?"

"He is furious. He now regrets that he didn't take more severe measures with you. The next time, he declares, there will be no more imprisonment on board a warship."

"Very well. The bird is in the bush once more," smiled the young American. "My Lord Cornwallis may have some trouble getting it into his hand."

"You must ever be on the lookout," cautioned Roger.

"I wonder if I could venture among the men and hear for myself?" asked Peter. "They wouldn't know me with a blackened face. I can play darky quite well, you know."

"I don't advise it," Silas put in. "You know such a thing would be dangerous."

But Peter was obdurate. He was so anxious to learn the true state of affairs, that, with some blackening from the logs on the hearth, in a short time he had transformed himself into an excellent negro boy, after which he opened the door, and, bidding his companions good night, disappeared.

It was true, as he had already heard, that the escape had excited the whole British camp. It was the sole topic of conversation wherever he went.

Sauntering toward the large house occupied by Cornwallis he paused in front of it, where he caught sight of handsomely uniformed officers, among whom was no less a personage than the commander himself. Several hours had passed since the deliverance, and Colonel Tarleton had come over from Gloucester Point and was among the group.

"It is outrageous!" cried Cornwallis, stamping the ground in a passion, as he addressed Tarleton. "Think of it! A pesky boy has released prisoners from one of our warships. They are now no doubt back with the Rebel army, and we have the disgrace."

"It is very annoying to say the least," was the reply. "I wish that young scamp had been turned over to me."

"I had a right to think that Captain Dacres was able to keep him safe. He must explain matters satisfactorily when he comes ashore, or the Charon will have a new master."

"He needs discipline, your lordship."

"What ho, Friend Bolt!" cried Cornwallis, as the familiar figure of the head Tory of Yorktown joined the group. "Your young Rebel has fried a pretty kettle of fish."

"So I have learned, your excellency. But we will get him yet."

"What, didn't the volleys from the Charon finish him?"

"I think not," replied Martin. "If certain information which has just come into my possession is correct, we shall have the pleasure of hanging the young scapegrace."

"What have you heard?" Cornwallis was deeply interested.

"My informant says that the boy is somewhere within our camp. He has been seen, but somehow or other for the moment he has escaped my spy."

"Do you hear that?" and Cornwallis turned abruptly to Colonel Tarleton. "I will rake Yorktown as with a fine-toothed comb. No doubt he is even now hiding at home."

"He has been home, but is not there now," resumed Martin. "He left the house some time ago. My spy is trying to find his trail."

"What sort of a bloodhound do you keep, Master Bolt?"

"One of the very best. People call him Simple Danny, but he isn't as witless as he looks."

Peter waited to hear no more. Scarcely had the last words left old Martin's lips than he glided away, and was soon lost among the shadows of the rambling street. He had learned something. Simple Danny was in the pay of his enemies.

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK IN THE TOILS.

If Washington had captured one of the crack regiments in his command, Lord Cornwallis would not have been more chagrined than he was over the exploit and escape of Peter, the boy patriot. His rage was something terrible, and Captain Dacres of the Charon came in for a good share of it.

Peter had learned enough to know that it stood him well in need to steer clear of the British, who were now looking for him, raking Yorktown as with a fine-tooth comb, to use the Earl's expression. Both Martin Bolt and Gideon Mosket were sure to be on the lookout for him, and he determined to make his way to the American camp, where he would for the time, at least, be safe.

He did not care about leaving his young companions, who might fall under royal displeasure, but self-preservation stood first with him, and early the morning after the last events he slipped from the beleaguered village and safely reached the patriot line. Here he was warmly welcomed by Washington, who had learned of the Charon adventure through Captain Gallion. The great leader of the American armies conversed with Peter, who gave him much information concerning the enemy, and at the conclusion of the interview he admonished the boy patriot to keep out of harm's way, saying:

"They will not be satisfied till they have you in their clutches. You have stolen a march on Lord Cornwallis, and he will set all agencies to work to secure your arrest."

"I shall look out for myself," replied Peter, with a smile. "I have no desire to fall back into the red-coated snares, but they will have to be very alert if they catch me again."

"On the other hand," resumed General Washington, "they will no doubt continue to fill our camp with their spies, and, as you are familiar with the citizens of Yorktown, I shall appoint you spy catcher."

"I don't think Gideon Mosket will again enter our lines, after his former experience. He knows that a rope is dangling for him if he does, but all the same I will watch for that adroit rascal."

That very night, as Peter was strolling through the camps, his attention was suddenly called to a man who was selling rosy-cheeked apples to the soldiers. Nothing at first seemed suspicious to Peter, but all at once he started and began to eye the apple merchant with more than ordinary interest. The man, seeing that he was watched by the keen-sighted boy, suddenly turned on his heel and started toward the edge of the camp.

"That man is a spy," ran through Peter's mind, at these abrupt movements. "It is not Gideon Mosket, but all the same he is more than a mere apple peddler."

To follow the fellow was now uppermost in young Peter's thoughts. Swinging his empty basket on his arm and whistling a careless air, the suspected man pursued his way toward Yorktown. Peter was cautiously at his heels. When the fellow dodged between the American pickets the boy's last suspicions were confirmed.

Suddenly there leaped from the screen of some road shrubbery three men, and before the youth could retreat, as many bayonets were presented at his breast, and he was told that he was a prisoner. Here was a peril which he had not looked for. The spy turned and laughed in his face, and as Peter looked into the muzzles of the muskets he saw his doom. After all his shrewdness he had been nicely trapped, and now he could think of nothing for a moment but the fate which Cornwallis had decreed for him.

"How do you like it?" grinned the decoy. "Don't you think the tables have been turned with a vengeance, my young fox?"

The boy did not reply.

"This isn't taking Rebel prisoners from the Charon," continued the man, with a savage leer. "I guess you won't have such another opportunity. I get twenty guineas for this bit of work."

Peter turned away and swallowed his resentment.

"I think we will give you a guardian this time who will see that no bent nails are used to unlock prison doors. You will have Martin Bolt for a jailer."

What, was he to be put under the eye of that Tory? Was he to be shut up in old Martin's house, where he would not only be watched by its master, but would have a fierce bulldog for a guard? The thought was enough to drive every vestige of color from his face.

Half an hour after his capture Peter Halket found himself in a small room in Martin Bolt's house. It was a high-ceiled apartment with barred windows, and not a weapon of defense within reach. A candle was burning on a table in the middle of the place, and he knew that the door was locked, for his captors had turned the heavy key, and the noise sounded in his ears like a note of doom. He was within a few yards of friends, but they knew nothing of his arrest, and probably would not know until the final act in the drama.

He was wondering what would be the next move of his captors when the lock clicked and the door swung open.

In a moment he stood face to face with his old foe, Martin Bolt, but the rampant old Tory was not alone. Beside him stood his bulldog, King George, one of the most vicious-looking animals Peter had ever seen, a great evil-eyed canine with teeth that threatened to tear him to pieces if he moved hand or foot.

"Bring in a chair, Pompey," said Martin, in tones of command, and a giant negro entered, carrying an armchair which he deposited in the middle of the room.

Old Martin seated himself in the depths of the chair and complacently crossed his legs. Then he took a pipe from his pocket, lit it, and contemplated Peter in silence.

"Back sooner than you expected, eh?" he grinned, as his piggish eye danced with triumph. "When it comes to turning neat tricks, commend me to the King's friends. This isn't the old rat-infested Charon, Master Halket."

"I know that," returned Peter, returning the Tory's look with interest. "I am in the house of the meanest Tory that ever drew the breath of life."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Martin, taking a puff. "You do me great honor, boy."

"Which is more than the patriots will do, if they ever get you into their hands."

"Well," drawled old Martin, "I hope you don't think I am going to march through the lines and deliver myself up to the Rebel, Washington, and his ragamuffins?"

"No, you will keep, out of harm's way, like the coward you are," was the reply.

As if imbibing some of his master's hatred for Americans and the cause of liberty, the bulldog crawled toward Peter and eyed him savagely.

"When do the Americans intend to assault our lines?" suddenly asked the Tory.

"Yes, you'll get a mine of information from me!" cried Peter, derisively.

"Eh? Maybe you'll want to tell to save your life," ejaculated old Martin. "My Lord Cornwallis has a great liking for you just now, boy."

"A liking which I return in the same coin," flashed the young prisoner.

"What do you think of him, King George?" said Martin, turning to the crouching dog that showed his teeth and emitted a low growl.

For some minutes old Martin smoked in silence.

"Maybe you don't know how I discovered your work?" he said. "All boys, thank fortune, are not Rebels."

"You are right. I know that Simple Danny is in your pay, and that you have educated him to be a Royalist."

"Good! Danny is not as simple as he makes out," laughed the Tory. "He's worth a dozen young Rebels like yourself."

"Left to himself, Danny would not be for the King."

"Maybe not," observed Martin, proudly. "But I must bid you good night. King George will keep you company."

The old man shook the ashes from his pipe and rose to his feet. The door opened, and the big black appeared and carried out the chair. Then Martin backed toward the door, which closed upon him, but the giant dog remained to keep Peter company.

The candle by this time was nearly burned down, and Peter calculated that erelong he would be in the dark, guarded by King George, for the dog seemed to have some of the characteristics of his royal master across the sea. There was nothing for Peter to do but watch the candle and his canine guard. Not for a moment did the great, vicious eyes of King George show signs of weariness.

No doubt Martin Bolt had retired to the parlor of the house, where he was entertaining some of the royal officers, and presently Peter heard merry voices, which confirmed this belief.

The candle at last flickered at the cup of its brazen socket, and then with a spasm died out entirely, and the room became dark. Peter retreated to the wall, where he braced himself and gave over to feelings of despair. To be watched by a lot of soldiers was not half

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so bad as to be under the eye of such a guard as a huge animal ready at the slightest move on his part to spring upon him and tear him to pieces. If there had been a weapon of any kind at hand, a stave or a knife, it would not have been so bad, but Peter had been robbed of everything in the search, and was helpless.

He dared not move for the presence of King George, and although the brute made no noise, Peter knew that he was on the alert, and that he would carry out the wishes of his master without the slightest compunction.

Wearily the watches of that night of danger wore on. Suddenly Peter was startled by a low growl from the dog. The next moment he heard a slight noise at one of the barred windows. As he was standing near it he inclined his head and listened.

"He must be imprisoned in one of the upper rooms," he heard a voice say, and then he heard retreating footsteps.

The heart of the boy patriot leaped into his throat. He had heard the voice of Nelly Brewster!

CHAPTER IX.

FATE OF "KING GEORGE."

Through the night hissed a bomb, and falling upon a roof crashed through it, and presently flames leaped skyward. It was Washington's compliments to Lord Cornwallis. Peter in his dark prison, guarded by the huge bulldog, heard the dull report of the American cannon, and then the cries of the citizens as they rushed toward the flaming building.

In a short time another bomb scurried across the heavens and dropped in front of the British general's headquarters. There was an instant scattering of redcoats, and Martin Bolt, who was present, performed a somersault as he tried to get out of harm's way.

"Look at the old Tory!" cried Silas Wingate, as he watched Martin's antics. "It would take a good fox-hound to catch him."

"But he will be caught some day by our people," responded Roger. "What puzzles me, Silas, is, where is Peter? Nelly and I failed to locate him, though we know that he was taken to Martin's house. If he is not rescued he will feel the iron hand of our foes, and it will have no mercy. We must not desert him now that he is in the very shadow of the noose."

"I have no thought of doing so, but we must be cautious."

"I am sure Danny knows. The witless boy, as we call him, is in Martin Bolt's pay, and if we could find him we might worm from him the secret of Peter's disappearance."

"For Danny, then!" cried Silas, and the two boys hurried away, looking on every hand for the simple youth.

The guns in the American fortifications had grown silent, but the excitement in the village had not abated. The house fired by the bomb was almost destroyed, and a few soldiers and citizens lingered on the scene.

"There's our quarry!" exclaimed Roger, plucking Silas' arm. "Now for our game."

Simple Danny was leaving the lighted scene, and the patriot boys at once took after him. Danny was a good walker, and, as if suspected, he suddenly broke into a run, but Silas and Roger were not to be cheated of their prey. All at once the hand of Silas Wingate fell upon the fugitive's shoulder, and he was pulled backward. Danny gave his captors a blank stare.

"What boys want with poor Danny?" he asked.

"Come with us and you shall see," was the reply. "Make no outcry, or we will have to resort to hard measures. Ah, here we are Danny! Walk in."

They had reached Roger's home, and in a moment the simple boy was inside. He looked around like a frightened animal, and then was thrust into a chair.

"Danny know nothing," he whined, though his brilliant eyes told a different story.

"No one has asked you what you may know," replied Silas, with a smile. "You keep your mouth closed when old Martin tells you to."

"Me no friend to Master Bolt."

"You can't hoodwink us, Danny," Silas went on. "We know all about your spying for the head Tory of Yorktown, and you will now do some talking for us."

The simple lad was silent.

"Where is Peter?"

Danny looked into the faces of his captors and shook his head.

"The dumb game won't work," Silas cried, shaking the boy till his teeth chattered. "Peter is in old Martin's house?"

"How Danny know?"

"Because you are Martin's watchdog. Men call you Simple Danny, but you know enough to spy for Martin Bolt, who is liable to give you more blows than bread."

"He whip me once," said Danny, shrugging his shoulder.

"I told you so. And yet you serve this old scamp, who would do anything to please the King. You saw Peter imprisoned?"

"Danny dare not tell."

"Which means that you fear the might of Tory Bolt?"

"Him got King George to help him."

"Yes, the bulldog. We know that, Danny. But please don't try to keep us

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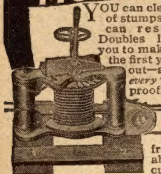

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here all night. Is Peter upstairs in Martin's house?"

"Old Martin find out if Danny betrays him," whined the prisoner.

"What is he does? You can slip over to the American camp and be safe from his wrath."

"But him send for Danny, and General Wasnington have to give him up."

"Don't take General Washington for a ninny," exclaimed Silas. "He cares little for any demands old Bolt may make, and even if Lord Cornwallis should demand you, he would get the coldest refusal he ever received. We can promise you that."

"Danny afraid just the same."

Silas glanced at the clock, which ticked on its shelf and then resumed:

"We'll give you three minutes in which to tell us just where Peter is. A lie won't go, Danny. This is serious business. Now, sir, where is Peter Halket?"

Danny glanced up into his captors' eyes, but saw no mercy there.

"Peter in the house all right," said he, in low tones and with a hurried look around the room.

"We know that, but in which room?"

"In the lower one to right of hall."

"Why, Nelly listened there," said Roger, with a glance at Silas.

"So she did, and heard no sound. In the lower room you say, Danny?"

"Him in there with King George."

"Guarded by that ferocious brute?" exclaimed Silas. "What a monster Martin Bolt is!"

"Room all dark, too," said Danny.

"Are you afraid of King George?"

"Me?" Danny seemed to sink into the depths of the chair. "King George has great teeth."

"Like all his kind. But he wouldn't bite you because he knows you?"

"Danny no like to tempt him."

"Come now, my boy. You know where Peter is. You are familiar with old Martin's bulldog. He won't molest you. You shall open the way to liberate Peter."

The occupant of the chair did not seem to comprehend.

"We'll look the ground over," continued Silas. "The chances are that old Martin is hobnobbing with some of the redcoat officers. He is always currying favor with them. We'll go and see. Come."

Dragging the simple boy from the chair, Silas did not relinquish his grip on Danny's arm for fear that he would give him the slip at the first opportunity, and in this manner they were soon in the vicinity of their goal.

The house was strangely quiet. Danny shrank back the full length of Silas' arm and looked up into his face with a shudder.

"Me fear King George," he gasped.

Silas shook him like a rat.

"It's too late to back out," he said, with all the sternness he could command. "You know the way to Peter. You know where old Martin keeps the keys to the dark room. You will get them and open the door."

"But dear Master Silas——"

"No shrinking," put in the patriot boy. "It is Peter's freedom or the end of Danny."

Thus threatened the simple boy crept across the porch in front of the house and opened the door. Silas and Roger trod at his heels. Danny had the cunning eyes of the weasel, and these orbs found a bunch of keys in an old table which stood in the hall.

"Now the door," said Silas.

"King George in there," hesitated the captive.

"We know he is, but the dog knows you. Go ahead!"

Gingerly Danny inserted a key into a door before him and seemed to hold his breath. His face was white as death.

"You go in first," he said to Silas.

"I don't think I'll risk the teeth of that big beast," smiled the boy patriot. "He'd be at me in a jiffy, and I know what sort of terror King George is. Open the door, pacify the dog, and let Peter out."

"What if King George kills Danny?"

"We'll bury you with the honors of war," grinned Silas, with a smirk at Roger.

"Yes," responded Roger, "and we'll inscribe on your tombstone, 'He died in a noble cause.'"

Biting his bloodless lips, Danny unlocked the door and pushed it ajar.

"Go in!" said Silas.

The next moment the figure of the simpleton vanished and the door was shut.

"It is only Danny," the boys heard him say. "Come here, King George. You know poor Danny."

Not a sound followed these words. Silas tapped lightly and warningly upon the closed door. Presently it opened, and they caught a glimpse of Danny's white face.

"No Peter in there!" he cried.

"What, the room empty?"

"King George dead," replied the simple boy.

"It can't be."

"But him lying on the floor all still."

"We must see. I have my tinder box," said Silas, and he proceeded to make a light which he held over his head as he sprang into the room.

"Look, Roger!" suddenly rang out his voice. "It is true. The big dog is really dead. And Peter is gone!"

The boys stared at the huge hulk of the bulldog which lay on the floor. The next instant they recoiled and gazed into one another's faces. There were loud voices on the porch, and above all roared the strident tones of Martin Bolt. Danny, with a cry, turned on his heel and vanished.

This thrilling story of youthful adventure will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. A lot of strange and exciting things happen. Read it. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs only $1.00 and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Got In.

A shoe salesman from Lynn was very anxious to sell to a large consumer in Cincinnati. The buyer of the Cincinnati house, who had a bizarre sense of humor, bought according to whim. When the salesman's card came in he kept it and sent out the office boy with a nickel to pay for it and break the news gently that nothing was doing. The office boy returned with another card.

"What's that for?" asked the capricious buyer.

"He said you weren't getting your money's worth," replied the boy. "He sells two of these cards for a nickel."

The Lynn man got in.

* * *

The Ready Retort.

Mrs. Winfall, a society woman, always allowed the housekeeper to hire her servants.

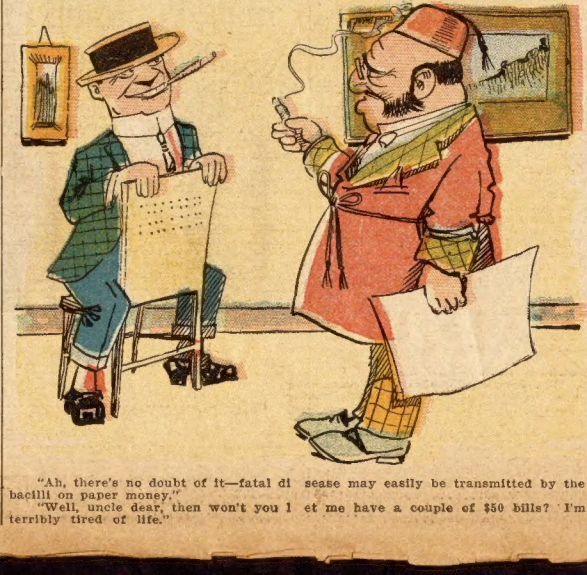
One morning, however, the mistress wished to interview the cook, who had been engaged only the day before.

"What is your name?" inquired the lady.

"Mrs. McCarty," replied the cook.

"Do you expect to be called Mrs. McCarty?"

"Oh, no, ma'am, not if you have an alarm clock."



"Ah, there's no doubt of it—fatal disease may easily be transmitted by the bacilli on paper money."

"Well, uncle dear, then won't you let me have a couple of $50 bills? I'm terribly tired of life."

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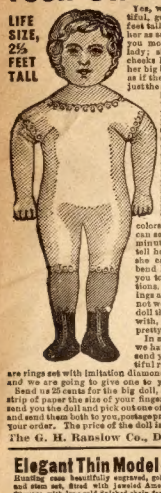
LIFE SIZE, 2½ FEET TALL



Yes, we want to send you this beautiful, golden-haired doll. Nearly 2½ feet tall, and she will make you love her as soon as you see her. Let us tell you more about this charming little lady; she can not be broken, has cheeks like two pink roses and with her big brown eyes, and lips that look as if they wanted to be kissed, she is just the sweetest doll that you ever saw.

She is so big and fat that you will have to put her to bed in your own crib and dress her in your own out-grown clothes or some of the baby's. With a real child's dress on, and a red bow that can't get lost or come untied in her bright curls, you will have a baby that all your little friends will admire, and you will love her better than all your other dolls because she is a kind that won't break, lose her eyes or snarl her hair.

This doll is stamped in beautiful colors, on strong cloth and mamma can sew her up on the machine in ten minutes. The printed directions will tell her how to make Miss Dolly; and she can be made so that you can bend her arms and legs and allow you to place her in all kinds of positions. She has on bright red stockings and black laced shoes that will not wear out. She is the kind of a doll that your grandma used to play with, only the doll of her day had no pretty face like a little live girl.

In addition to this great big dolly, we have a present that we want to send you free. We have a lot of beautiful rings, some straight sets and some are rings set with imitation diamonds, rubies, etc., and we are going to give one to you.

Send us 25 cents for the big doll, and enclose a strip of paper the size of your finger and we will send you the doll and pick out one of the prettiest rings we can find and send them both to you, postage prepaid, the same day that we get your order. The price of the doll is 25c and we give you the ring free.

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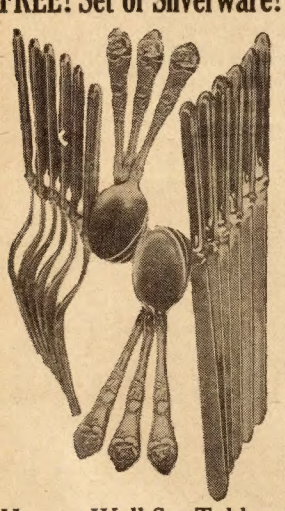

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If you wish to obtain the entire set (6 knives, 6 forks, 6 spoons) get some friend or neighbor to let you send his or her subscription along with yours. On account of the great value of this set we cannot send the whole set with less than a $4.00 subscription.

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Mrs. Hatchett's Husband.

Hannah Holden Hatchett was known as "the pagan poetess." She had published three books. And she had married one man. The names of her books were "Venus and Adonis," "Pipes of Pan," and "Airs from Arcadie." The name of her husband was Micahel Moses Hatchett.

Mrs. Hatchett went to parties. Mr. Hatchett went to business. But once Mrs. Hatchett got Mr. Hatchett to stay away from business and to go to a party with her. The party was given by Mrs. Benjamin Bonaparte Motley.

Mrs. Motley introduced her guests to Mrs. Hatchett. And to Mr. Hatchett also.

"This is Mrs. Hatchett," said Mrs. Motley.

"I am so glad to meet you!" said Mrs. Faddle. "I have set your 'Ode to Olympus' to sweet, soothing music, and have made a lovely little lullaby out of it!"

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Hatchett.

"This is MR. Hatchett," said Mrs. Motley.

"MRS. Hatchett's husband?" said Mrs. Faddle.

"Yes," said Mr. Hatchett, proudly; "you bet!"

"This is Mrs. Hatchett," said Mrs. Motley to a second woman.

"I just adore your 'Nectar and Ambrosia'!" said Mrs. Havoc. "I do my own cooking, and while I boil the coffee and fry the eggs, I always chant the refrain!"

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. Hatchett.

"This is MR. Hatchett," said Mrs. Motley.

"MRS. Hatchett's husband?" said Mrs. Havoc.

"Yes," said Mr. Hatchett, grimly; "that's me!"

"This is Mrs. Hatchett," said Mrs. Motley to a third woman.

"I am simply crazy about your 'Pean of Praise'!" said Mrs. Rummage. "I have embroidered the first line in yellow chenille on green plush for a mantel drape in my mother-in-law's back parlor."

"Mercy on us!" said Mrs. Hatchett.

"This is MR. Hatchett," said Mrs. Motley.

"MRS. Hatchett's husband?" said Mrs. Rummage.

"Yes," said Mr. Hatchet, crossly; "nothing more and nothing less—gosh blame it!"

Incorrigible.

Day by day, as Mrs. Worth's household and kitchen furniture and groceries slowly disappeared, she saw that the moment approached when a final stand must be made. One morning, when Jimmy, son of the borrower, appeared at the back door with the statement, "Ma wants the washboiler," Mrs. Worth determined to act.

"You tell your ma that when she brings back what she has already borrowed, I will lend her the boiler."

In a little while Jimmy reappeared.

"Ma wants to know what she has borrowed."

"There was a quart of flour," began Mrs. Worth, a half-pound of lard, some onions, and butter and spices; the screwdriver, the hatchet, a pair of scissors,"—she paused, recollecting,—"three spools of thread, a paper of needles and——"

Jimmy was gone. Presently he rapped on the back door again.

"Ma says you write 'em down. I forgot some of 'em."

Mrs. Worth sat down with pencil and patiently made an alphabetical list of all the articles she could remember.

Jimmy took the list and disappeared. A half-hour later he once more appeared at the back door, and announced:

"Ma says if you'll lend her the washboiler to carry them in, she'll bring 'em home."

Mind-Reading.

A young man and his wife, accompanied by their two children, a boy and a girl, entered a street-car and sat down on one of the side seats. The little girl was a beauty, while the little boy with his strongly marked features and freckled skin, was quite the opposite.

Directly across the aisle sat two ladies, evidently a mother and daughter. The younger of the two looked critically at the children. Then she scrutinized the parents. Then she turned to the elder lady and smiled, and made a whispered remark. The young man, who had been watching her, leaned forward.

"Madam," he said, "you are quite right. The girl fortunately looks like her mother, and the boy looks like me."

That he had guessed accurately what was passing in her mind, her look of confusion left no doubt.

A Chinese Linguist.

That he has obtained a position in Qui Gee College, near Canton, China, where he "teach Americe word" and "have fourty study," is the word received from Charles Gee Ong, who followed the pro-sale occupation of dishing out noodles while in Walla Walla, Wash.

His educational qualifications were not discovered here, but evidently were when he reached his old home, for the states:

"I bin teach since February 1. I will be sure quick on job on June. I like come back to American sooner can. Now China person like to be learn Americe word to use. Because have no much big trade with America, flour, cotton, tobacco and New York refined oil, beside many things. I very shame to tell you, I am school teach, you know how my poor education, but all study want me to stay." Ong says he is sorry, "miss many things since come China, baseball, track meeting and animal show, but I cross the ocean."

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7600 Girl's Norfolk Coat, 8 to 14 years.

7595 Pointed Yoke Dress, 1, 2 and 4 years.

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